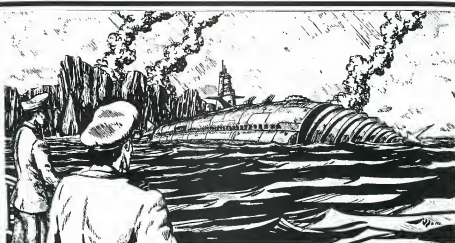




JAPANESE GIANTS No. 7

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CONTENTS

Editorial.....	2
People Scenes (Letters).....	3
GOZUELLA.....Ed Godziszewski	4
GOZUELLA 1985.....Mark Rainey	12
Gigan Blueprints.....Andre Dubois	13
Toho Retrospective	
ATRAAGON.....Ed Godziszewski	16
Main Arkadia in Grande des Heres— History of Captain Harlock.....Mark Rainey	30
JG Record Review	
"Classical Works of Akira Ifukube".....Bill Gudmundson	33
Godzilla Meets Zone Fighters.....Andre Dubois	34
Capsule Commentary	
THE MAN WHO STOLE THE SUN.....Ed Godziszewski	36
MACROSS—THE MOVIE.....Bill Gudmundson	36
NAUSICAA.....Mark Rainey	37
THE SECRET OF THE TELEGRAM.....Mike Paul	37
REMARKS.....Mark Rainey	38
Kaiju Kapaz.....	39

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This Issue Dedicated to:
Cheese, who is dead.
(But he was doing so well)

NEXT ISSUE:
Toho's Frankenstein Films:
FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD
MAR OF THE GARGANTUAS

JAPANESE GIANTS #7

Ed Godziszewski, Editor and Publisher
Mark Rainey, Associate Editor
Bill Gudmundson, Contributing Editor

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Editorial

Welcome to JG #7! I never dreamed it would take over 5 years before another issue was published—almost as much time as it took to build the Atragon. I regret that the issue was not finished before the US release of GOZUELLA as my article was to be an advance look at the new film. Nonetheless, it concentrates on the original Japanese version, and in light of the great amount of misinformation printed domestically about the film in MONSTERLAND and other publications, it should set the record straight about the film.

A lot has transpired since Rodan brought JG #4 to life. The face of Japanese fantasy/SP has forever been changed by the explosion of Japanese animation, the failure from which has been deeply felt even in this country. Much live action sits so costly and time-consuming compared to the lesser expense and limitless visual possibilities of animation, the animated product has for all practical purposes replaced live action filmmaking in Japan. Japanese animation has much to offer—varied but mainly adult-level storylines, intricate designs, and high technical standards. While I enjoy most Japanese animation and am amazed by its boundless imagination, I cannot help but find myself a bit saddened by this trend. First and foremost, I'll always be a fan of live action sci-fi films, hence my excitement in returning to Japan for last year's special event, the premiere of GOZUELLA. Though a two hour ride on the Galaxy Express may be a beautiful experience, it still can't generate the same level of awe and wonder as five minutes of Makiyama versus Mysterians or Godzilla under attack by Frontier Marliners. My preference stems from the fact that the well-executed special effect creates an illusion of reality while even the finest animation rarely creates this illusion. But through animation, Japanese SP will continue to flourish, granting new fans for the genre and giving long time Japanese SP fans quality entertainment to tide us over between new live action films or revivals of old favorites.

Also during the last five years I have been fortunate to return to Japan twice, renewing old friendships and establishing new ones. In 1982 I had the opportunity to experience SP (and, Japanese-style at the Japan SFPA Convention. The fans are every bit as enthusiastic and creative as SP fans in this country, and I found a refreshing lack of oddball fans (who don't always know the difference between reality and fantasy) that have made conventions less enjoyable in this country. Each visit to Japan has only served to strengthen the warm feelings which I have for Japan and its people, and each time I return home I feel another little part of me remains behind, beckoning me to return again.

I hope that you will enjoy this issue, but whatever your comments, I am interested in hearing them. Nothing's more disappointing than working hard on an issue and never knowing if it delivered what readers are looking for. So, until next time, sayonara.....

Ed Godziszewski

Front Cover: Noriyoshi Ohrai's pre-production art for GOZUELLA. Back Cover: Toho's overseas advertising for ATRAGON.

PEOPLE SCENES

THE TORIO TEMPS Sept. 15, 1985

Monster Snails Terrorize Postal Service

TOKYO AP Although postmen stand at more than an inch apart, they became ever closer as giant snails invaded Tokyo's post boxes. One overgrown slug spewed a stream of ink, another spewed a stream of fire. More high-tech snails than ever thought possible.



Letters

Kyle Smith
Seattle, Washington

First of all, a hearty well-done on the improved format... the "older style" collating in addition to the quality of printing. Starting with the cover, Bill's rendition of Rodan is simply beautiful. On the flip-side I did miss the old JG logo and I thought the new one, actually smushed in the drawing, lacked the punch and bold contrast.

The first major suggestion I might offer is that you consider doing away with the letters page. It's fun to see what other fans have to say, but I really think the space could be better used with another brief article or some full-page art. This is one aspect of professionalism in fanzines that I just plain can't see... space is at a real premium in something published so infrequently and at such a cost to publisher and subscriber alike, and for what you get out of it, I feel the letters page is unjustified (what do you think, readers?—Ed.).

The capsule commentaries were good for the most part, with the small exception of "The Village of Eight Gravestones" which seemed a little clumsy in its presentation. I would have liked to see a longer review of "Arareveridi Yamaso" both because of its excellence and because for most American fans it will remain forever a "lost" film. I wish more SPAMMERS fans could see what a great Yamaso masterpiece it like.

Your trip to Japan article is likely to have some readers shaking their heads, even with the photos. I've seen all the photos, and I still can't believe your incredible good fortune... meeting Rodan and Tanaka in addition to seeing Godzilla himself. Your style makes the story all the more entertaining.

I was severely disappointed to see the 2nd JG fan poll listed, and even seeing Giant Robot meet his deserved fate was a consolation. I'd be very interested in seeing how fanboy's tastes have changed.

Greg Shoemaker brought up a good point about artwork. Mike did a good job on the King Ghidorah blueprints, a great improvement over his Mechagodzilla blueprints of the previous issue. John Ioffink's work is beautiful and meticulously done. But both renderings suffer from the same "Mianese"—I knew exactly where the good photos these drawings came from. Courtesy for Mark Rainey's "Birth of Rodan" and your own "Death of Rodan" symbolize montage... the only places in the body of the magazine that try to break the stock photograph mold. I'd ask the question, "If you want it to look exactly like a publicity photo, why not just print the photo?" What's the point of making a drawing at all... and more importantly, do you really think this is what people want to see when they buy a fanzine? I suggest artists save their reverts for where it's needed most—for our favorite scenes for which there often is NO photograph... or present fanlike scenes from new angles.

My only other major beef about JG #6 is a sense of a lack of variety I got looking over the issue. I get

the feeling that "Japanese Giant" should be retitled "Toho Giant"...there is much more of value in JG fantasy as well. My recommendation is not that you reduce the length of your excellent filmbook/commentary or the bibliography sections (or to make them non-Toho...there must be something sacred), but to cover other aspects of Japanese wonder. This will also give JG fans of a nostalgic flavor by running some features on more recent developments...we have to face the fact that the classic days of the giant monster in Japan are largely over. We can only hang on to our all-time favorites, we should also look at what's going on now as JFFJ does.

Greg Shoemaker
Toledo, Ohio

Let me say that #6 is your finest issue to date. You and your contributors' experience shows in the refining of the graphics, more eloquent text, choice of artwork and selection of photos, and the widespread format.

Some of the things I took to task in my loc on #5, if they are assumed critical, appear to have been considered in producing #6. Those refinements are what allow me to be so positive this time around. Yet, I continue to marvel at the "drawing power" (pen intensity) of monster/fanzine mechanica. Theatricality is the only real word I can think of to describe their publication. They only perpetuate the myth of the monster's/fanzine's existence, and thus their more rightful placement belongs in the pages of the comics, not in a film magazine, where, if any such discussion is undertaken, schematics of the actual self-inflatable bodies appear to show the readers what makes 'em work." Possibly someone in your letters column will express his view on schematics so I can learn of their appeal.

Your travels on touring Japan and its fantasy features, apart from inducing uncontrollable envy, is an example of reading about overseas films which most of your readers will never have the opportunity to share. This is what makes JG so important. Whether it be something like your article or the reviews of films which have not been, and in most cases will not be, released in the U.S., JG is a fantasy come true; we can live out our dreams through the eyes of others. Although JG has been distributed in America, your knowledge of both U.S. and Japanese versions which enabled you to compare them is the ROMAN commentary is a fine example of this facet.

David Schinkel
Warren, Ohio

Congratulations for the fine job on JG #6! It was a long time in the coming, but it was worth the wait. The artwork has really improved as the whole since the last issue. I particularly liked the look cover, with the flying monster almost looking like Satan himself, as well as the cue title on the cartoon on the back page and the insightful picture on the letter's page.

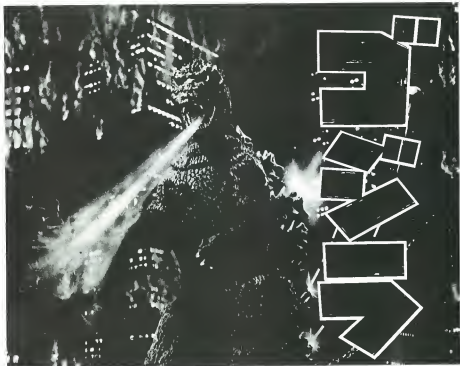
Your feature filmbook and commentary gave justice to that fine film, and as I read the commentary, I couldn't help recalling a "Sanki Tensai" saw some time back where Hiroyuki Sasaki told about ROMAN as being a ripoff of GODZILLA. There was also a TV-series listings book which called it "inferior to American-made films of the same lapsed nature," all of which shows that people who show bias against this genre are the ones most likely to viciously malign them without even bothering to look into them. Consequently, the good films suffer as well as the bad.

I was unaware of the vast differences between the U.S. and Japanese versions of ROMAN. Two scenes I thought would be mentioned were: the one where Rodan demolishes the subway's station (close inspection of the scene shows the name of the camera shop to be "The Photocopy Shop"—Ed.) and where Rodan emits a powdery ray similar to the original Godzilla (this was meant to be a jetstream of air shot at the missile launcher—Ed.). As for the dubbing, I really didn't see anything wrong.

The King Ghidorah article was fun and shed some light on the subject. It's sad that Ghidorah and Mechagodzilla won't be returning despite their popularity, but it is true that Toho has already shown us their final fates in BIRTHDAY FOR MONSTERS and THUNDER OF MECHAGODZILLA. Still, to think these creatures were finished off by one Godzilla, but by a poor creature.

Certainly the highlight of the issue was your article on your visit to Toho. Your detailed observations and candid comments made it extremely informative as well as a delight to read. It is also an interesting paradox in motion picture re-view that whereas the Japanese edit their films for re-release, here in the U.S. the industry adds extra unused footage and sells the film to TV or the theaters again!

Although, the most informative and entertaining issue yet—I'm looking forward to the next one, and many more.



CAST

Mitamura (Prime Minister).....Keiji Kobayashi
 Goto Kaki.....Ken Tanaka
 Nanko Osumu.....Tamoko Sawaguchi
 Hiroshi Osumu.....Shin Takuma
 Prof. Hiyoshida.....Yoshioke Naoki
 Takegami (Chief Cabinet Secretary).....Takatoshi Naitoh
 Trump.....Tetsuya Takeda
 Kaneko (Finance Minister).....Eitaroh Onuma
 Kuroi (Foreign Minister).....Masao Suzuki
 Mohri (Director of Defense Agency).....Junichi Osumoto
 Kakurai (Chief of Staff).....Shinsuke Mikimoto
 Okabe (Director of National Land Agency).....Mikito Mori
 Isomura (Home Affairs Minister).....Nobuo Kaneo
 Kajita (Director of Science and Technology Agency).....Kiyoshi Yamamoto
 Kaneko (Internal Trade and Industry Minister).....Takeshi Katoh
 Hidaka (Director-General of the Environment).....Yoshihumi Tajima
 Kishimoto (Chief of Staff of the Maritime Force).....Tamuhito Kato
 Imafuji (Chief of Staff of the Ground Force).....Eiji Kashi
 Kiyohara (Chief of Staff of the Air Force).....Isao Hirano
 Bessie.....Kenji Mura
 Takemura.....Kenichi Iwata
 Nisao (Geologist).....Hiroyuki Kojima
 Gotoh.....Kei Sakai
 Kitagawa.....Takaoi Ono
 Newcomer.....Takaoi Morimoto
 Captain of Dai-go Yabuta-maru.....Takashi Iwata
 Members of Dai-go Yabuta-maru crew.....Shigeo Kato
Sensuke Taira
 Kamijoh (Dinnerman).....Shinpei Hayashida
 Nuclear Power Plant Technician.....Koji Ishizaka
 Shinkansen Passenger.....Hiroshi Kawayama

CREDITS

Original Story and Produced by.....Tomoyuki Tanaka
 Assistant Producer.....Tomo Tanaka
 Screenplay.....Shinichi Nagahara
 Director of Special Effects.....Teruyoshi Nakano
 Director.....Koji Ishihara
 Director of Photography.....Kazuo Imai
 Production Designer.....Akira Sakurai
 Music.....Reiji Kuroki
 Music Performed by.....The Tokyo Symphony Orchestra
 Recording Mixer.....Kobayashi Tetsuo
 Lighting.....Shinji Kojima
 Film Editor.....Yoshitami Kuroki
 Still Photographer.....Toshio Ishihara
 Assistant Director.....Takao Ohgawa
 Production Manager.....Takashi Morioka
 SPECIAL EFFECTS STAFF
 Directors of Photography.....Takeshi Yamamoto
 Yoshiaki Onoda
 Production Designer.....Yasuyuki Imai
 Lighting.....Kobayashi Tetsuo
 Miniature Explosion.....Tadashi Matsuo
 Masaru Kase
 Suit Maker.....Kobayashi Tetsuo
 Wire Works.....Koji Matsuo
 Mitsu Miyakawa
 Make-up.....Takashi Takeda
 Matte Photography.....Yoshiaki Ishihara
 Optical Photography.....Takashi Miyamoto
 Yoshiaki Onoda
 Still Photographer.....Takashi Ishihara
 Assistant Director.....Eiji Kashi
 Production Manager.....Takao Ohgawa
 SPECIAL ADVISERS
 Hiroshi Takeuchi—Professor Emeritus of Tokyo University
 Video Aoki—Military Critic
 Torihiko Otsuki—Doctor of Engineering
 Klein Ueberstein—Science Fiction Writer
 Shohichi Taira—Journalist

GODZILLA

by
Ed Godalszewski

A typhoon rages through the night in the Sea of Japan. The crew of the fishing boat Dai-go Yahata-maru struggles to keep their ship from being dashed against the rocky shoreline of a small island. Hiroshi Okumura, a marine biology student on board as an observer, anxiously peers out a window at the crashing rocks. Suddenly, there is a great upheaval, a blinding flash of light, and the waters are drowned out by a fearsome sound....

Days later, a young reporter named Goro Naki comes across the fishing boat while he is out sailing. Recognizing the vessel, reported lost at sea previously that week, Goro sails along side and boards the ship. He is confronted by a grisly sight, as all aboard appear to have been brutally butchered. As Goro inspects the carnage, he is attacked by a huge insectoid creature. The slimy beast is about to claim another victim when it suddenly falls lifelessly to the deck, killed by Hiroshi who had survived by hiding in a locker.

Hiroshi convalesces in a hospital, being kept from the press while the incident on the boat is being investigated, and he is visited by his colleague, Professor Hiyashida of the Hiyashida Bioscience Institute. Having identified the murderous insect as a huge parasite, the professor hopes that Hiroshi can identify its host.

Hiroshi carefully sifts through a series of photographs and sketches when an expression of horrified recognition comes across his face. Professor Hiyashida holds his breath as Hiroshi hands him the photo...a photo taken 30 years ago in the midst of a devastated Tokyo...a photo of the mighty monster, Godzilla.

Since the news of Godzilla's return would surely lead to nationwide panic, Goro's superiors agree to suppress his story for the moment. Anxious to learn more about Godzilla, Goro visits Professor Hiyashida to interview him. Having been born after Godzilla's first appearance 30 years ago, Goro views Godzilla as a legend more than as a part of history. He shudders with fear as the professor recounts the chilling tale of Godzilla's first attack on his homeland. As the reporter prepares to leave, he notices that Hiroshi's sister Nako works at the Hiyashida Bioscience Institute, so he befriends the girl to learn of Hiroshi's whereabouts for an exclusive story on the sole surviving witness to Godzilla's return.

A Soviet nuclear submarine is destroyed while on patrol in Russian coastal waters. The Russians openly accuse the Americans, and the threat of nuclear war looms over the world. To deflate world tensions, the Japanese government holds an international news conference to explain the disaster. Sonar photos taken in the vicinity of the submarine's last reported location are presented as evidence of the American's innocence—the photos clearly show the familiar silhouette of Godzilla. Close inspection of the photos by Professor Hiyashida reveals that Godzilla has absorbed massive doses of radiation from the explosion, causing the beast to grow to a height of 80 meters.

Looking to satisfy its hunger for even more energy, Godzilla comes ashore and attacks a nuclear power plant. The monster instinctively seeks out the reactor and rips the core from its housing. Godzilla's fins glow with dazzling intensity as radiation courses through his body. A flock of birds flies overhead, distracting the beast and causing it to drop the reactor core. Godzilla follows the birds out towards the sea.

While studying videotape of Godzilla's appearance at the reactor, Professor Hiyashida notices a magnetic concentration located in the monster's ears which he believes can explain Godzilla's attraction to the cries of the birds. The military sets a trap for Godzilla on a remote volcanic island as the professor attempts to duplicate the bird sounds in an attempt to attract Godzilla to the trap.



Top: After man's feeble attempts to destroy him have failed, mighty Godzilla roars defiantly as he enters the Shinjuku business district.

Second from Top: Prime Minister Mitsuura (Keiju Kobayashi) intently watches defense agency monitors as Super-X is about to engage Godzilla in battle. Chief Secretary Tanigami (Takeshi Ichikawa) looks on in the background.

Third from Top: A revived Godzilla stands ready to confront Super-X amidst the flaming ruins of Shinjuku's skyscrapers. Bottom: Laser tanks fire on Godzilla as the fearsome beast rampages through the heart of Tokyo.

Meanwhile, the Russians and Americans send emissaries to Japan, seeking permission to use nuclear weapons against Godzilla while the monster still lurks in Japanese coastal waters. Russian ambassador Chiyofsky, acutely aware of the immediate threat to his own country, offers the Japanese use of their Vladivostok Missiles as part of an open defense alliance. After lengthy discussions by the Japanese officials, the Prime Minister refuses all nuclear aid on principle alone, instead preferring to let his country deal with the menace in its own way. Privately, the Prime Minister laments, "They still do not comprehend (nuclear power)...they would not be so anxious to use nuclear weapons if it were Moscow or Washington that was threatened."

The Russians, lacking confidence in the Japanese defense posture, position an orbiting space platform over Japan. The satellite is armed with a nuclear missile, the tracking device for which is secretly concealed on board a Russian freighter in Tokyo Bay. When Godzilla unexpectedly appears in Tokyo Bay, the freighter is severely damaged during the military's attack against the monster and the missile's launch sequence is accidentally activated. Godzilla easily annihilates the military forces with his fearsome atomic breath and the mighty behemoth comes ashore, heading for the heart of Tokyo. Meanwhile, Professor Miyashida perfects his sonic transmitter and he heads for the island volcano to set his trap for Godzilla.

Godzilla enters the Shinjuku business district, striding amidst the giant skyscrapers which dwarf even the huge monster. The Japanese Self Defense Corps uses two mobilized laser cannons to distract Godzilla and hold him in position for an attack by the army's secret weapon, the flying battle tank Super-X. Gliding into attack position, Super-X launches a flare skyward. Distracted, Godzilla looks up and roars at the blazing flare. Super-X fires a deadly poison Cadmium Bomb into the monster's gaping mouth. Feeling the toxin quickly taking effect, Godzilla unleashes a blast of atomic breath at Super-X before collapsing into the side of an enormous skyscraper.

The victory becomes a hollow one as the Russian missile is launched at an already dying Godzilla, located in the heart of the world's most densely populated city. The Americans send out an intercom missile which manages to destroy the Russian warhead over Tokyo, but miles above the atmosphere. However, the polarizing effect of the atomic blast knocks out all the power in Tokyo, even causing Super-X to fall helplessly to the ground. The explosion casts an unearthly reddish glow in the sky which soon subsides, giving way to a radiation-induced storm. Bolts of radioactive lightning fill the air, some of which strike Godzilla's motionless body. Drawing renewed strength from the fallout, Godzilla revives! Meanwhile, the Super-X crew manages to activate a backup power source and the vehicle flies off to confront



Godzilla. Having exhausted its supply of Cadmium Bombs, Super-X unleashes an incredible barrage of rockets and laser beams, all of which have no effect on the relentless monster. Godzilla blasts Super-X from the sky with his atomic breath and crushes the ship by toppling a 40-story skyscraper onto it. Godzilla rampages through Tokyo unopposed.

Professor Miyashida finally reaches the island where the fatal trap has been rendered. Positioned on the rim of the volcano, the sonic projector is activated. Inexorably drawn to the sound, Godzilla soon arrives on the island. As the beast reaches the rim of the volcano, explosive charges set in the crater walls are detonated, hurling the monster into the fiery pit below. Godzilla is defeated....for the moment.

COMMENTARY

After a ten year absence from the screen, the King of the Monsters has finally returned. Despite the title of the film, this is not a remake of the original 1954 version as had been widely reported. Instead, this film is presented as a sequel to the original GODZILLA, ignoring the existence of the monster's 14 subsequent adventures. Though distressing to some fans, this lack of continuity was part of Toho's conscious decision to alter the course of the series which had floundered in the 1970's, stopping abruptly after TERROR OF MECHA-GODZILLA (1975). By returning to a serious tone and reviving Godzilla's villainous character once again, Toho hoped to both regain audiences which had grown up with Godzilla in the 50's and 60's as well as garner a new generation of fans in the former's children, thus justifying this huge economic gamble. Rather than create a new situation where this approach could be worked into the existing Godzilla mythos, producer Tanaka opted for the easiest route—ignore the stories which did not fit with the "new" Godzilla legend.

In building his technical staff for GODZILLA, Tanaka sought the services of two men responsible for much of Godzilla's previous success—director Inoshiro Honda and composer Akira Ifukube. Despite Tanaka's repeated pleas, both men declined to participate for both personal and professional reasons. With both men into their seventies, the combined effects of age and the rigors of filmmaking were a consideration, but perhaps even more important was each's feelings about the series in general. The passing of Godzilla's creator, Eiji Tsuburaya, had caused the series to become creatively bankrupt in their eyes. "Godzilla died when Eiji Tsuburaya died—Godzilla films should not be made again," was Honda's sentiment. Ifukube concurred, and the new script for this project did little to change either man's mind. In fact, upon learning that changes were being made to the Godzilla legend such as increasing Godzilla's height from 30 meters to 80 meters, Ifukube was rumored to have said, "I do not write music for 80 meter monsters."





TOMOYUKI TANAKA.....Executive Producer
To assist in the making of giant monsters, Tomoyuki Tanaka has produced virtually all of Toho's 30-plus SF films. Tanaka was a major force behind reviving Godzilla on the 30th anniversary of the original GODZILLA. The idea of Godzilla attacking a nuclear reactor (used in this film) was his original concept for an aborted 1980 Godzilla comeback.



TERUTOSHI NAKANO.....Special Effects
Kurosaki taking the axe baton from Hajji Tombarays in 1970, Nakano has built a reputation as the unrivaled master of pyrotechnic miniature effects. However, his handling of science fiction subject matter, and monsters in particular, has generated a fair amount of negative criticism. Nakano's films always seem to exhibit an unevenness in size quality.

KOSUJI HASHIMOTO.....Director
Given the fact that Kohji Hashimoto had no previous experience in the giant monster genre, his choice as director for a Godzilla revival was somewhat surprising. His only previous experience with science fiction was on SATOMARA JUPITER (1982) whose weak script produced little enthusiasm from science fiction fans.



REIJIRO KUROKU.....Musical Director
Another unexpected choice for the staff of GODZILLA was Reijiro Kuroku who lacked any previous SF film credits. He brings a new style to live-action SF film making by using a full orchestra and lush composition—a stark contrast to small orchestras playing Ifukube's traditional yet majestic themes, Sato's offbeat tones, or Mabe's odd sounds.



Tanaka wasted little time in finding replacements for Honda and Ifukube, turning to Kohji Hashimoto for director and tapping Reijiro Kuroku, a relative newcomer, to score the film. Hashimoto had just completed his less-than-auspicious SF directorial debut in Toho's SATOMARA JUPITER (1984), leaving science fiction fans a bit leery of what was to come. Hashimoto's work on GODZILLA shows some improvement, though much of the film gives the feel more of a TV melodrama than that of a large scale motion picture. His treatment of the human drama is a bit heavy-handed as evidenced by over-dramatic performances by some of the cast. Especially poor is his use of the female lead, inexperienced Yasuko Sawaguchi, whose performance is embarrassingly poor. Still, Hashimoto does deliver some impressive and exciting moments. Godzilla's entrance is particularly noteworthy: set on a foggy evening, a flock of birds suddenly bolts from the underbrush. A deep growling is heard as the camera pans through the fog, revealing the nuclear power plant as seen from Godzilla's viewpoint. Hearing a loud crash outside, a security guard wanders out into a courtyard, whereupon the ground splits open in front of him, knocking him backwards. An astonished look comes over the man's face, and the scene switches to an optical shot from behind the guard, showing his facing an enormous foot. All in the same shot, the camera pans upwards over the full height of Godzilla's body, fixing on the malevolent gaze of the monster's face as he lets out a frightening roar.

The screenplay conceived by Tomoyuki Tanaka and written by Seichi Nagahara is sadly lacking in terms of the human drama. The story revolves completely around Godzilla, providing very little in human interest. Pacing is equally a problem as illustrated by the tedious scenes involving Goro and Maoko trapped in the skyscraper after Godzilla has been poisoned. By devoting so much time to this tiresome "Towering Inferno" aspect of the script, the excitement of Godzilla's rampage and the impending missile strike is somewhat diminished. By not allowing for any exposition on Super-X before its entrance into battle, its appearance is jarringly abrupt.

Some prior exposure for Super-X would have been wise, perhaps by having one of the main characters serve as a crew member. This could have given the audience more of an interest in the fate of Super-X as well. The film's major flaw, for which the director and screenwriter must share equal blame, lies in the conclusion. Once the sonic projector is activated, Godzilla leaves Tokyo, arrives on the island, and is blasted into the volcano, all within less than two minutes of screen time. The scene plays without any tension or drama—Godzilla's demise is achieved so quickly and easily that it is a bit letdown after the exciting battle which preceded it. To the credit of the screenwriter, the serious tone of the script is a major plus, and many of the plot devices work well. The plan to poison Godzilla with the Cadmium Bombs is not only quite clever, but a realistic and believable means of dealing with the monster. The Russian missile crisis adds a good dose of tension as well as providing a method to revive Godzilla for the finale.

Reijiro Kuroku faced the unenviable task of following in the footsteps of Akira Ifukube, whose popular scores have become every bit as much a trademark of Godzilla as the monster's atonic benth. Rather than try to mimic Ifukube's style, Kuroku wrote a full symphonic score which, though adequate, gives more the feel of an American score than that of a Japanese score. Godzilla's theme is loud and slow paced, pulsing with a varying tempo, dominated by low end brass. The theme is effective, though not at all like a majestic Ifukube theme. The theme of Super-X is a brass military march which comes off a bit overblown considering the visual that accompanies it. Kuroku composed a sad, lyrical piece for the climax which is entirely inappropriate, contributing to the scene's unsatisfactory nature. Trying to make Godzilla's demise seem regrettable is in direct conflict with the events of the film, and any excitement which this scene might have held otherwise is lost as a result.

Terutoshi Nakano once again leads the special effects team for Toho as has been the case for all of



YOUSUKE WATSUMI.....Professor Ritschids
Most familiar to Toho SF fans as Detective Shindo in CHIRAKA, THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER, Watsumi was discovered as a sports magazine model in the early 60's. After his film debut in YOUNG BEAST, Watsumi's acting career took off. His special effects film credits include THE H-MAN, DOGORA, THE SPACE MONSTER, and I LOVED PEARL HARBOR.



KEN TANAKA.....Goro Maki
Tanaka's acting career began with an appearance in the widely acclaimed SANGAKU 6. His performance in the 1975 film GATE OF YOUTH won him rave reviews, gaining him numerous roles in television films and motion pictures. Other films in which Tanaka has appeared include FIREBIRD, 72 GRAND PRINCE, and BLUE MOUNTAINS.

KELU KUNAYASHI.....Prime Minister Mitsuura
A very popular actor, Kobayashi's film roles have covered a wide spectrum, from comedy to serious drama. Among his many achievements has been winning the Mainichi Film Concours Best Actor Award. A veteran of over 300 films, Kobayashi has had leading roles in SUPERHERO OF JAPAN, THE GRAND FLEET, and the classic tale of Japan's birth, THE THREE TREASURES.

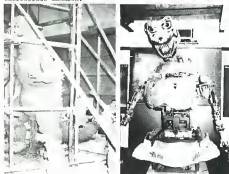


HIROSHI KOBAYASHI.....Geologist Misono
Lending a bit of nostalgia to GODZILLA is the appearance of Hiroshi Kobayashi who has had roles in many Toho SF films—GIGANTIS, MOTRA, MATANGA, ATARASHI, GODZILLA VS. THE MUTO, and CHIRAKA. To name a few. Only the untimely death of Akibiko Hirata in July of 1984 from lung cancer prevented Kobayashi from being joined by his old colleague in GODZILLA.



MAKING OF GODZILLA

Toho's science fiction films since the death of Eiji Teuburaya. One of Toho's publicity tactics was to sell the film as being "high-tech", so to that end they constructed a fully articulated 4 meter tall (18 feet) robot. Dubbed the 'Cybot' Godzilla, construction on the robot began in February 1984 and it was unveiled to the public in a highly touted press conference held in July. Operated by hydraulic pressure, the robot displayed a number of nice facial expressions and all of the body parts (except the legs) were movable with varying degrees of realism. The robot was computer-controlled, allowing various combinations of movement to be tested and then played back in sequence after being stored in the computer's memory. Toho's initial claim was that the cybot would be used in up to 70% of Godzilla's scenes, but in actuality it wound up being used only for closeups of Godzilla's face. Seen in profile, the cybot looks quite realistic, but direct frontal shots are rather weak and do not interact well with shots of the costume. For filming, the cybot was disassembled, with the upper half of the body placed on a platform set among the miniatures. The cybot's greatest value to the production was in publicity instead of filming. The July press conference attracted curious newsmen from around the world. After filming, the cybot was reassembled and transported around Japan during October and November, the main feature in a massive publicity campaign. After the tour's conclusion, the cybot did not return to Toho Studios, its current whereabouts unknown.



Top left: A giant model of the Cybot under construction. Note the one meter tall master model in the foreground. Teruyoshi Nakano and Nobuyuki Yasumaru look on.

Top right: The mechanical skeleton of the Cybot ready for application of detailed layers of skin.

Below: Using a crane, six technicians position the upper half of the Cybot onto a platform for filming closeups. Over 3000 computer controlled parts operated by one ton of pressure help create a previously unseen array of expressions for Godzilla. Most filming of the Cybot was done at normal camera speeds.



Aside from the Cybot Godzillas, little else new in the way of special effects techniques for a Japanese film is in evidence in GODZILLA, though some of the existing techniques are definitely improved in their execution. The majority of Godzilla's appearances are still accomplished using the man-in-the-suit technique. The new Godzilla costume was designed and created by Nobuyuki Yasumaru, a veteran suit maker at Toho who began his career in the miniature prosthetics department at Toho under Eiji Teuburaya for GORATH (1962). Among his previous creations have been Gorosaurus, Redrah, and the original version of Gigan. Yasumaru attempted to design the new Godzilla by combining the features of the original Godzilla with the facial expression of the MOTHRA VS. GODZILLA-style Godzilla (generally regarded in Japan as the best Godzilla design). As a result, Godzilla displays features previously seen only on the original costume: ears, four toes on each foot, long fangs, and staggered rows of fins along the back. This is combined with a sinister face which owes much of its character to its evil Moth-Godai eyes. The body lacks any well-defined shoulders or breasts, making it look a bit unnatural from certain angles. The remainder of the body proportioning is fine, and the suit also has a long, elegant tail. On film, the suit looks best when viewed from an angle or in direct profile. Viewed from straight ahead, the lack of shoulders is apparent and the fangs protrude too far from the mouth (when closed). Facial design of the suit could have been improved with the addition of clearly defined brows over the eyes and some detailed muzzle features for the upper jaw.

Nobuyuki Yasumaru first built a one meter tall prototype model of Godzilla, starting on February 1, 1984. The body was built up using clay, with latex-covered polystyrene being added to render intricate body details. Nakano and his staff offered suggestions for changes throughout the model's construction, and when the final version was approved, it was painted in the same color scheme as the completed costume. This model was used for reference in building the costume.

Below: Nobuyuki Yasumaru puts the finishing touches on the one meter tall model of Godzilla. This model served as a prototype for construction of both the Godzilla costume as well as the Cybot. Yasumaru was chosen to design and construct the new Godzilla based on almost 20 years of experience in suit making during which time he created some of Toho's finest monster suits. His Gorosaurus costume is considered the best single monster suit by both six personal and four aside, and indeed Yasumaru also considers it to be his best work. Another example of Yasumaru's work is the comically evil Gigan which he personally built from Akira Watanabe's original illustrations. Yasumaru's work at Toho currently involves the construction of props for a variety of film and non-film projects which Toho supports.



TOHO

The first step in building the Godzilla suit was for Yamamaru to sketch the figure of the actor playing Godzilla, both frontal and profile, onto a wall-sized panel. Over that, the outline of the monster was drawn to give Yamamaru a precise guide for sizing and proportioning the suit. The next step involved the construction of a two meter tall statue (minus the fins and the tail) which precisely duplicated every detail of the one meter prototype model. This statue was the master from which molds of various body parts would be cast. A wire skeleton for the statue was built to match the wall drawing and it was mounted on an iron post for support. Each part of the wire skeleton was lined internally with wood, stuffed with scraps of wood and foam, and finally covered over with plaster. Yamamaru personally sculpted all of the detail into the statue by building up and carving away layers of modeling clay. After the statue was completed, molds of individual sections of the body were cast in Eversoft urethane foam. Each body piece was touched up with an outer layer of latex rubber and a supporting inner layer of fabric, and finally the pieces were assembled. The tail was cast as a solid piece of foam, and a small metal bar with eyelets was inserted to allow the tail to be controlled by overhead wirework. A new concept in suit design was the internal control system for the movement of the eyes and mouth. A network of pneumatic tubes was built inside the costume to supply air pressure for operation of the eyes and jaw, as well as to articulate the upper lip in a snarling expression (a new feature for a Godzilla suit). The pneumatic system was connected to air canisters located in the tail, and the whole system was operated by remote radio control. These new features, combined with judicious use of the Cybot Godzilla, helped Godzilla to display more lifelike movements than had been previously possible.

The suit took two months to construct in all and represented a departure from the normal suit making procedure for Toho. Normally the design and construction phases were handled by separate teams, but the new suit was designed, molded, and built by Yamamaru. By casting from a master mold and assembling the body pieces, much greater control over the finished product was achieved. One thing which did not change despite the improvements in suit making technique was the resultant discomfort for the actor inside the suit. In its completed form, the costume weighed in excess of 100 kg—in enormous burden to be carried under blazing hot studio lights. Actor Kengo Satauma, who also played the part of Hedorah in GODZILLA VS. THE BIGG MONSTER, was able to last in the costume for 10 minutes at a time, but only due to his excellent physical conditioning. A normal person, it was estimated, could last but two minutes inside before collapsing. One minor concession to Satauma's comfort was a series of holes drilled into the fiberglass fingers on the inside part of the nails, allowing for a medium of ventilation as well as serving as an outlet for perspiration.

Godzilla was also represented by a number of large scale props. A full size (1/1 scale) foot, over 13 meters long, was built for interaction with actors on a sound-stage. This prop required a one-ton crane to move it



K. Satauma rehearses a scene in the miniature Shinjuku set before donning the Godzilla costume for a take. Satauma, who previously went by the name Kengo Nakayama, is not a stranger to performing in monster suits, having played Hedorah and Gigan in the 1970's.

about. Though used sparingly, this prop represents one of the few attempts by Toho to show human characters in the same scene as Godzilla, and the first attempt without resorting to opticals. The effect is obvious, but nonetheless effective. This prop was also used during an August press conference as an attention-getter—it was placed in a large hall with broken ceiling debris surrounding it, as if Godzilla had just dropped in on the news conference himself. An oversized foot built to 1/20 scale was used for closeups of Godzilla's foot destroying buildings and stepping on miniature vehicles. Though the prop itself looks a little stiff on screen, the larger scale miniature used with it help add more realism. A separate set of hunk fins was made for shooting aerial scenes of Godzilla swimming through the ocean. A second tail was cast from the mold used for the costume and mounted on a metal rod. This prop was used for closeups of Godzilla's tail thrashing in the water or destroying miniatures. Overall, all these props work rather well on film, though the foot props, as is normally the case with such things, do not interest quite as effortlessly with the costume as the others.

Left: Terrified extras flee from the full-size Godzilla foot prop. Notice the cable attached to the giant prop. Selective camera angles and studio-generated smoke help to conceal the cable on film.

Below: The 1/20 scale foot prop in action, about to destroy miniature cars during the nuclear reactor attack. To create a cloud of smoke, fans beneath the stage are activated as the foot crashes down.





One of Tanaka's ideas for making *Godzilla* seem more imposing was to have the beast increase in size from its normal 50 meter height to 80 meters. Whether or not this had much effect on audiences, one by-product of this decision which could not escape notice was that miniatures were downscaled from the normal 1/25 scale to 1/40 scale. This had the unfortunate consequence of a corresponding drop in the level of realism (and not coincidentally a drop in the expenses for miniatures). Miniature vehicles in particular suffer as a result of the smaller scale. Though intricately constructed, these vehicles just are unable to come across convincingly on screen. Miniature sets did not suffer as greatly, due in large part to the use of locales which contained buildings of a large size. The Shinjuku set, populated with its many huge skyscrapers, provides an exciting backdrop for the battle with Super-X. The Ginea set is highlighted by the new 15-story reflective glass building located next to the Bullet Train tracks (replacing the old Toho Nichigeki Theater). This building is used for one of the most dynamic shots in the film—fixing the camera on the building, *Godzilla*'s reelection is seen moving through the blazing ruins of the Ginea. Extensive use of low angles, quick cuts, and clever shot composition helps to minimize the effect of down-

scaled miniatures. However, for the money which Toho was investing, the extra realism attainable with 1/25 scale miniatures would certainly have given the film a much better reputation. Probably the biggest disappointment in the area of miniature construction is Super-X. The problem lies not so much with the miniature itself but with the design. Considering the exciting futuristic mecha designs which Toho has produced in the past, Super-X is a big letdown. Its design is dull and unimaginative, somewhat resembling a fat floating flounder. With the pivotal role that Super-X plays in the film, one expects much more than is delivered. Supposedly, a number of exciting designs were submitted by the staff for Super-X designs, but Tanaka nixed them in favor of the final design.

Despite their claim to high-tech filmmaking, *GODZILLA* illustrates one problem area which remains unimproved for Toho—matte photography. Though blue lining is now kept to a minimum, matching the grain of each element still leaves much to be desired. This is unfortunate since most matte shots in the film contain nice composition.

Overall, the special effects in *GODZILLA* work rather well. All of the monster scenes are shot with high-speed photography which helps immeasurably in



Top of page: Teruyoshi Nakano surveys his handiwork—the expansive 1/40 scale miniature set of Tokyo's Shinjuku district. Taking over 40 man-months to construct, the miniature buildings are painstakingly accurate in their detail. For extra realism, real glass windows were made and fluorescent light fixtures were placed inside for illumination. According to Nakano, "That set was the most realistic in Toho's experiments for horror and science fiction movies. Moreover, the miniatures of Tokyo were the most expensive in the company's history." Note that the set is built atop a platform about two feet above the stage floor, allowing camera crews to set up low angle shots which create greater realism. Some incomplete forced perspective buildings are placed in the foreground. Also note the curvature to the sky backdrop (upper left of photo) which helps give the illusion of depth to the set.

Bottom left: The miniature Shinjuku set as it appears in the film during *Godzilla*'s response. The total effect is quite convincing. Miniature vehicles such as the laser tank seen in the bottom of this photo are carefully placed in each scene so as not to belie their small size. Shooting of this scene in September 1984 marked the most hectic phase of special effects. Altogether almost 700,000 feet (13 hours) of SFX were shot for *GODZILLA*.



One of Godzilla's most appealing characteristics has always been his atomic breath, accompanied by the blue-white glow of his fins. Unfortunately, Nakano has never been able to master a realistic rendering of this effect. Except for the one scene previously mentioned, he does not even bother to animate the fins when Godzilla lets loose with his atomic breath. The ray itself still lacks the gaseous texture which Eiji Tsuburaya had excelled at and the ray lacks dimensional perspective, sometimes seeming to curve strangely at its target.

GODZILLA benefits greatly from the use of stereo sound. A full symphonic score complemented by a fine mix of sound effects adds greatly to the viewing experience. Hearing Godzilla's fearsome roar (fill the theater in stereo) is impressive. Some of Toho's previous monster features lacked sound effects for the monster's footsteps. However, GODZILLA uses a booming footstep sound effect extensively to create a very realistic impression of the giant monster's presence. The Japanese need to have mastered the stereo film process quite well, and Toho's new Nishitaki Theater (where I saw the film) utilized a new sound system which should make American theater owners sit up and take notice.

Released to huge crowds in Japan on December 15, 1984 (over 800,000 saw the film on its first day alone), GODZILLA was a success at the box office for Toho. Despite facing stiff competition from holiday releases of GORILLAS and CHRISTOPHER, the King of the Monsters once again established himself box office champion. Yet, to this date there has been no comment by Toho as to whether or not another film will be made. It seems that Toho is hedging on this question, waiting to see how well the film does in its overseas markets. Should Godzilla return again in 1986, it will be interesting to see the direction which the new series will take—will Godzilla again battle mankind, or will the monster vs. monster concept be revived? Only time and Tomoyuki Tanaka can tell for sure.

creating realistic monster movements and an illusion of great size. The night time setting for the monster scenes lends a nice touch of atmosphere to them. Nakano and Hashimoto should be commended for some impressive action pieces. The film's highlight occurs as Godzilla rises from Tokyo Bay and is attacked by the military. The attack is well choreographed as enormous explosions erupt on and about Godzilla. Long shots of the costume in the water tank are nicely intercut with tight shots of the cyber roaring amidst explosions as the fighter jets fly past. After taking the full force of man's weaponry, Godzilla's fins flash for a moment (the only time this effect is used with Godzilla's atomic breath) and he strafes the dock with his atomic breath. The military is destroyed by a spectacular Nakano pyrotechnic display reminiscent of Mechagodzilla 2's attack on Tokyo in TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA. After the army is destroyed, there is an eerie silence as Godzilla surveys his handiwork, then letting out a triumphant roar. The silence doubles the impact of the scene, driving home the utter devastation. Similarly, Super-X's all out attack on the revived Godzilla is quite exciting. Super-X flies behind a skyscraper for cover as Godzilla fires his atomic breath through the building. Super-X uses this opening to blast Godzilla with its lasers; then flying laterally to circle Godzilla, Super-X darts between the skyscrapers and unleashes its entire arsenal of weaponry against the mighty beast, all to no avail. Once Godzilla has crushed Super-X, the camera slowly zooms in on Godzilla as he bellows forth a defiant roar.

Above: The camera crew moves in for a point-of-view shot of the nuclear reactor set, used for Godzilla's screen entrance.

Below: A tight shot of the Cyber is filmed. The mechanized beast snarls, bares its teeth, roars, and swivels its head in all directions through a series of pre-programmed commands.





NEW WORLD PICTURES

GODZILLA 85

by
Mark Rainey

For those who have experienced the domestic releases of TITANIC (SUBSINKING OF JAPAN) and GALAXY EXPRESS, the new New World Pictures can do things like inspire a latent tendency toward violence to come dangerously close to showing itself, or at the least bring on a mighty gnashing of teeth. Roger Corman's merciless slashing technique that is generally known as "Americanization" has in the past culminated in disaster; unfortunately, all too often, the bombastic denunciation of the resulting product is aimed at the Japanese creators rather than at the American defilers of a once-honorable cinematic past. Such is the fate of GODZILLA 1985, originally a worthwhile and laudable successor to the 1954 classic, now on our shores a watered-down, mutilated travesty that ends up conforming to the inflated expectations of the American public rather than rising above (and harkening back to) the level of quality set by the earlier and more sophisticated films of the series. It was the first GODZILLA and the few other classics from Toho's renaissance period (such as THE MESSENGERS and ATOMON) that drew so many of us as serious fans to the Japanese monster film, and these films which managed to introduce the giant monster as a respectable addition to the realm of science fiction. The original GODZILLA 1954 contains many of the key elements that made the early films successful: the American released theatrically destroys them and manages to bring the film down to the same level of quality as the trips Toho passed off in the early-to-mid 1970's.

To the viewer, GODZILLA 1985 for the first time without any knowledge of the original version, the film must come across as something of a puzzlement. Sure there are some nice effects, well-orchestrated music, and the skeleton of a serious plot. But a skeleton is all there is. I can almost sympathize with some of Roger Ebert's staid criticism which he lambasted the film. But whether or not he is aware of it, most of his scathing criticisms only hold in the context of the American version. The harsh reviews in general given to the film can only recognize what the reviewer has seen — and with New World's GODZILLA we have seen little of what Toho actually put into the film.

New World's marketing department deserves slight commendation for some of the pre-release publicity in this country — though more for quantity than quality. The actual Godzilla suit made a tour of the States with the film, and there was quite an advertising campaign with the printed media. But creativity was not resident in the writing department; at least not with any aim for artistic integrity such as the Japanese had. The idea to have Raymond Burr reprise his role as Steve Martin was valid and worth considering at far as continuity in this country goes. But even Burr's more respectable lines are lost in the morass of banality that comes from a script which reduces the American military to a bunch of stereotypes, ignorant clowns that only cheapen the otherwise sincere performances by the Japanese cast.

The main flaw with the original Japanese plot is that it is perhaps too long and ponderous, too caught up in character interplay that is in the end inconsequential. But the viewer at least gets the opportunity to understand the characters and revel in the drama that surrounds them. We can feel the tension as it builds, even though we know the advent of Godzilla is to be the result of the plot's initial set up. There is a defined air of urgency about the prime minister that grows with each complication; his actions and dialogue convincingly reveal the burden that has come upon him as the leader of the shattered country. One can relate to the exhalation of the Super X crew after they have seemingly finished Godzilla with the G-missile bombs. There is great potential for emotional involvement if the viewer allows himself to be swept into the action, which is characteristic of the Japanese audience. However, all the subtlety is cut away from the American version, preventing any viewer from making an emotional contact with the characters and destroying the mood of true seriousness which does work well in the original. All that is left now is such bare bones that the re-

maining seriousness comes across as pretentious and melodramatic. There is so little dialogue (and much of what there is suffers from bad dubbing) that the main characters are reduced to token extras that pop in between the special effects. Result: boring.

Aside from spoiling the human interaction, New World has managed to bundle the handling of special effects in ways I never would have thought possible. The reasoning of Corman's staff is enigmatic. Why is Tsuburaya's name do perfectly effective monster scenes have to be shuffled around, re-edited and deleted altogether when the original format is more than adequate to produce the desired audience response? After all, one would think it would be considerably cheaper to present the film as is with the least amount of involvement by the releasing firm. Instead, someone has to be paid to re-write and re-cut footage in a way that is absolutely of no benefit to the film (and in the instances of scenes being deleted, is detrimental). For example, the nice shot of Godzilla's shadow falling over the crowd is inserted at his first appearance in the city rather than after his awakening by the radio-active storm. He logic here, folks, for when he first appears, there is no crowd of spectators to see him. Also inexplicable is the deletion of the scene where Godzilla's reflection appears in the windows of the Toho Nishiki Theatre, one of the more spectacular effects sequences.

One particularly nasty alteration of scenes involved the Russian colonel attempting to disarm the nuclear missile after it has been accidentally activated by Godzilla's striking of the control vessel. The scene has been edited so that, rather than trying to cancel the launch, the Russian actually initiates it. Is New World unable to accept (or more likely, too slow to accept) a Soviet soldier sacrificing his life so that Tokyo will not be destroyed? The Russians are thus made out as villainous as the monster; an element quite contrary to Toho's intent. There is no point to making such an alteration except to provide some insight New World staff writer with an opportunity to practice his "craft."

In addition to the visuals, the music has been extensively re-edited — in fact little more than five minutes of music remains tracked with its original placement. Again, this can only mean more expense in the long run for New World, and there is not a soul in the audience whose reaction to the film could be made more favorable by the alteration of the soundtrack.

Probably the only cases in which the editing as an improvement over the original are with the scene in which Goro Maki encounters the huge parasite (which is never explained in the US version) and with the end credits which features a symphonic suite of the main themes rather than the "pleasant" but out of place song that accompanies the end titles in the Japanese edition. In the parasite scene, there are a number of long, poorly executed shots of the creature, betraying its obviously artificial design. Quicker cuts and less movement of the "box" tend to increase its believability. An inexcusable faux pas occurs in Subur's monologue, however; the Japanese version's established unbelieveability. Ken, the survivor of the ill-fated fishing boat claims that Godzilla killed the rest of the crew. No one ever makes further mention of the parasite (except in an off-the-off remark about a five-foot sea ouse) and it seems terribly unlikely that Godzilla could ever be so selective in his attack.

The handling of a Japanese film like this presents fans here with a troublesome dilemma: We hope the film does well so that Toho will realize there is a market here and continue to make more movies that will get to our country. But on the other hand, films like New World intentionally or inadvertently (more likely the former) pander to the class of moviegoers whose level of cinematic sophistication falls into the class of retardity. Much of this can be blamed on Toho, for who with films like GODZILLA VS. MEGLON and GODZILLA'S REVENGE, some fans will simply never be able to see Godzilla in any other vein so matter what kind of rationale lies within the film. But on the other hand, until the average American viewer opens his mind enough to accept a movie technically as Toho's, eventually competent work like GODZILLA 1985, he will never see anything in these films better than the adolescent togetherness he has been fed by Toho and companies like New World Pictures over the last decade and a half.

DOCUMENT: BLUEPRINTS
SUBJECT: GIGAN

THE CYBORG MONSTER

Gigan is a cyborg, a creature whose natural limbs have been amputated and replaced with extraordinary mechanical and electronic devices which he can use as powerful weapons. One of the most evil monsters in creation, Gigan is deadliest in hand-to-hand combat because of his artificial limbs. In a close-quarters fight, Gigan can almost evenly match Godzilla himself. Originally from a planet of Star System M in the Hunter Nebula, Gigan has been used by alien races to conquer other worlds.

SPECIAL POWERS: For space travel, Gigan has the ability to transmute himself into a huge diamond-shaped crystal in which he is able to voyage through space at great velocity.

FILMOGRAPHY:

GOJIRA TAI GAIGAN (1972)

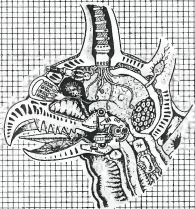
GOJIRA TAI MEGARD (1973)

ZONE FIGHTER---"Gojira Sakebi" (8-11-73)

SIZE: 65 meters tall
100 meters long
WEIGHT: 25,000 metric tons
FLYING SPEED: Mach 3



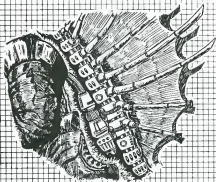
GIGAN BLUEPRINTS



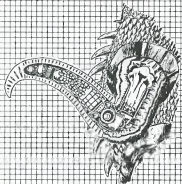
BRAIN: Although Gigan is more machine than animal, all of his special features are directly controlled from his brain. The main horn contains the control antenna through which aliens transmit orders to guide his every action. The antenna's wires are directly connected to the brain itself so that it is impossible for Gigan to rebel against his masters.

EYE: Gigan has one extremely sophisticated visor-like electronic eye with infra-red capacity. He can fire a deadly laser beam from just above the eye.

WINGS: Gigan is able to fly with the help of a very complex jet-propulsion rocket system built into his back and connected to his wings. The spines in each wing serve as exhaust tubes for the rocket system. The three wings themselves act as directional devices to control flight. With this mechanism, Gigan is able to fly at speeds up to Mach 3.

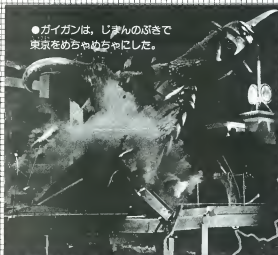


GIGAN BLUEPRINTS

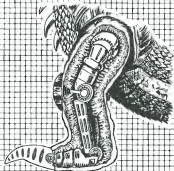


ARMS: (Left) Gigan's scythe-like claws are made of a special diamond-hard substance. The arms are reinforced by hydraulic joints and the bones have been replaced by metallic structures. These formidable weapons make Gigan a fearsome opponent in hand-to-hand combat.

INTERNAL ORGANS: (Below) The natural internal organs have been modified to absorb atomic energy.



●ガイガンは、じまんのぶきで
東京をめちゃめちゃにした。



CUTTERS: (Above) Gigan's spike-like cutters are made of a diamond-hard alloy, mounted on a chain driven mechanism which can spin at great speed and cut through anything. The nearly impenetrable skin of Godzilla is sliced in two like butter by these cutters. Even Gamera's shell could not withstand their attack.

LEGS: (Left) Like the arms, the legs have hydraulic joints and metallic structures in place of bones. The knees are covered with cushioned padding for extra protection.

配
給

恐怖の海底王国地上に挑戦！
緊急出動する万能原子戦艦！

製作

田中友幸

内谷英二

本多猪四郎

上原謙

田崎潤

林泉博

平田昭彦

小林哲子

北あけみ

佐原健二

藤木悠

山田五十鈴

高千穂ひづる

日守新一

石浜朗

北原義典

高千穂ひづる

日守新一

総天然色

東宝株式会社製作・配給

DIVING TO THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN TO CHALLENGE
THE EVIL UNDERSEA KINGDOM...

ATRAGON

... THE ULTIMATE WEAPON

SYNOPSIS

Late one evening a young commercial photographer named Susumu Hatanaka and his assistant Yoshito Mishibe are shooting a photo layout near Tokyo Bay when they are suddenly witness to a strange kidnapping where the victim and his captor drive off the dock and into the murky waters. While police investigate the incident, the photographer notices a beautiful young woman whom he thinks would be a perfect model. The girl is Makoto Shinguji, the only daughter of Captain Shinguji, commander of a secret submarine force which disappeared 20 years ago at the end of World War II. She has been raised from early age by her guardian, the former Admiral Kosumi, now an executive with the Kokoku Shipping Co. Susumu and Yoshito witness the attempted kidnapping of Makoto and Kosumi, but their timely intervention foils the abduction. The assailant, identifying himself as Agent No. 23 of the Mu Empire, escapes into the sea with a mindboggling and energy far beyond that of a normal man. The man disappears into a mammoth coffin-shaped submarine.

The mysterious kidnappings take a new twist as several days later Kosumi receives a package with the letters MU inscribed on it. The box contains film which brings to light the incredible story of the Mu Empire. An ancient civilization which sank to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean over 2000 years ago, the Mu Empire still flourishes and now announces its intent to regain its long-lost domination over the surface world. They warn that Captain Shinguji is secretly building a powerful undersea battleship, and that unless he is stopped, the world will suffer terrible consequences. All are shocked to hear that Shinguji is alive.

A series of disasters occur around the world to back up the Mu threat. Unable to attack the undersea kingdom with conventional weapons, the world appears doomed to defeat. Shinguji's secret weapon, which the Mu seem to fear, may be man's last hope, but the Captain's whereabouts are unknown. Kosumi reveals that Shinguji had actually deserted near the end of the war. Fortunately, one of Shinguji's men, assigned as a secret bodyguard for Makoto, is mistaken for a Mu agent and is captured by the police. Kosumi manages to convince the man to lead him to Shinguji's secret base to present a plea for use of the new weapon.

Kosumi is accompanied by Makoto, the photographers, and a journalist. The small band marvels at the amazing base of operation which Shinguji has managed to build. The Captain apologizes to his former commanding officer for deserting his post near the end of the war, but Kosumi assures him that the past is forgotten. When Kosumi asks Shinguji to assist the world in its struggle

against the Mu Empire, the Captain becomes enraged, flatly refusing to allow his invention to be used for anything except the one purpose for which he built the device—to restore Japan's fallen prestige.

The following day, Kosumi and his band witness the trial run of the amazing super weapon, Atragon. The vessel is not only a submarine, but it has the ability to fly, drill through the Earth, travel on land, and it can instantly freeze an object with a device called the zero cannon. The test is a tremendous success. At a celebration that evening, Kosumi reneges his plea for Shinguji's help against the Mu Empire, but the Captain becomes even more adamant in his refusal—Atragon is only to be used for the glory and honor of Japan. After the party, Makoto speaks to her father for the first time, questioning his warped logic which will surely lead to the defeat of the surface world. Shinguji staunchly maintains his stance, causing his daughter to reject him.

The journalist, actually a Mu agent, manages to plant a bomb in the dry dock which causes Atragon to be buried beneath tons of debris. In making his escape, the Mu agent takes Makoto and Susumu prisoner. The hostages are taken to the Mu Empire where they are brought before the evil Empress of Mu who sentences them to be sacrificed to the giant serpent god, Manda. All hope seems lost as the Mu Empire commences its attack on the surface world, inflicting terrible destruction.

Shinguji's men manage to clear debris from one of Atragon's deck hatches, and he orders his crew to ready the ship for immediate launch. Despite being pined down by tons of fallen concrete, Atragon breaks free of its prison and drills through the jammed dry dock door to freedom. Shinguji finally admits to the folly of his nationalistic thinking and agrees to use Atragon to defend the world. Racing to engage the Mu forces, Atragon arrives in Tokyo Bay moments after a Mu submarine has devastated the city. The mighty vessel chases the enemy sub to depths which no ordinary Earth ship could withstand, soon arriving at the Mu Empire.

Susumu and Makoto manage to kidnap the Empress and escape to Shinguji's undersea battleship just as the Mu unleash Manda. The sea serpent is no match for Atragon, being frozen by the zero cannon. Atragon drills into the seabed, boring through to the Mu power chamber. A strike team plants explosive charges and the vessel returns to the surface to witness spectacular explosions that signify the end of the Mu Empire. Sensing her desire to share her nation's fate, Shinguji allows the Empress to escape into the sea and die with her people.

COMMENTARY

by
Ed Godziszewski

By the summer of 1963, Toho had firmly established itself as a major producer of science fiction films, having released fourteen different features since 1954 when GODZILLA thrust them onto the international film scene. Each of these films was well-received in Japan, and overseas distributors eagerly bought them up at modest asking prices. With the demand for science fiction films at a high, Toho endeavored to meet this demand by releasing two or three titles each year. Some of the finest Toho films came from this era, and ATRAGON stood out as one of the best efforts of Toho's top creative team—director Inoshiro Honda, special effects master Eiji Tsuburaya, and composer Akira Ifukube.

In Japan, ATRAGON was released under the title KAITAI GUNKAN which translated as "The Undersea Battleship". The original idea for KAITAI GUNKAN came from the novel of the same name written by Shomoro Oshikawa in 1902. The screenplay was actually a combination of the story of KAITAI GUNKAN and an illustrated story by Toho's mechanics designer Shigeru Komatsuaki called KAITAI OKUKU ("The Undersea Kingdom"). Shinichi Sekizawa submitted his first draft of the screenplay to Toho's top brass on August 10, 1963. The project quickly received approval and the script was turned over to Shigeru Komatsuaki to translate the drama into storyboards and to design the production. After a month of polishing ideas and revising the script, a final draft was released for production to commence on September 15, 1963.

Armed with a shooting script and Shigeru Komatsuaki's designs, the creative team split the crew into three units. Under the direction of Inoshiro Honda, Unit A handled the lensing of the drama, while Units B and C were assigned to Eiji Tsuburaya for development of special effects. However, the task ahead was not an easy one—only three months were allotted to complete the rigors and place a finished feature in theaters. This tight shooting schedule was mainly a result of Toho's desire to release the film during the Christmas and New Year's holidays which were traditionally the prime box office season in Japan. Such a short shooting schedule was unprecedentedly short for films in those days, and doubly so for a special effects film. For comparison, three months total for the production schedule was one full month less than was allocated for filming special effects alone for FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD. Yet for ATRAGON, three months had to cover afx, editing, sound mix, post-dubbing, striking the final print, etc. No doubt such unreasonable conditions served as a tremendous burden to the creative team, forcing them into a few shortcuts that are evidenced in the final version. Still, the film ranks as one of Toho's best rounded science fiction productions.

Dramatically, as well as structurally, ATRAGON rates as one of Honda's finest achievements. Aside from the original GODZILLA, most of Toho's science fiction was mainly a series of special effects set pieces around which the story was loosely woven. Characters seemed somewhat incidental—the visuals carried the story along more than the people involved. However, Sekizawa's script for ATRAGON deferred the action and spectacle to the second half of the film, concentrating on establishing the characters and developing the film's central theme during the first 40 minutes. This represented somewhat of a gamble—the audience might be lost in disinterest before the visual payoffs. But the script's strength is that it tells an interesting story, and it is told in an interesting manner. This strength combines with tact direction by Honda and some fine performances by the cast to keep the audience engaged with the drama.

ATRAGON distinguishes itself as a uniquely Japanese film by selecting the themes of nationalism and personal honor as its focus. In all the world, the Japanese have shown the most highly developed sense of social unity and commonality of purpose—both concepts which quite



naturally give rise to strong feelings of national identity. Looking into Japanese history, there are numerous examples of the intense emphasis placed on collective identity and honor to which the individual subjected himself—the Samurai code, the exploits of the Kamikaze, etc. Honda's colleague Akira Kurosawa sums up the differences between Western and Japanese cultures:

"The Japanese see self-assertion as immoral and self-sacrifice (for the common good) as the sensible course to take in life. We are accustomed to this teaching and had never thought to question it."

Yet, while such loyalty and dedication are admirable traits, Honda sets out to show how these qualities can easily lead to a destructive and illogical sort of tunnel vision. Fierce nationalism had blindly led the Japanese into WWII some 20 years earlier, and it perpetuated the war when defeat was inevitable, wasting countless lives and resources all in the name of honor and country. Undoubtedly these thoughts weighed heavily on Honda's mind while filming ATRAGON. As GODZILLA was Honda's statement against the horrors of nuclear war, ATRAGON was his statement against blind nationalism.

The character of Captain Shingoro embodies the spirit of Japanese pride and nationalism. He feels great shame over Japan's loss of stature resulting from

1. *Something Like an Autobiography*, Akira Kurosawa, Vintage Books, New York, 1981. Translated by Audie E. Bock.

its defeat in World War II, but this is compounded by a personal shame—that of having deserted the Imperial Navy before the war's end. While he was safe, many of his comrades continued to fight, none of whom had died. As a result, Shinguji devotes 20 years at his secret base to developing the super weapon Atargon to not only restore Japan's fallen prestige, but also subconsciously to atone for his personal shame. The desire for restoration of honor—both national and personal—turns out to be a highly volatile combination, making Shinguji oblivious to the impending worldwide doom. When his former commanding officer questions his refusal to allow Atargon to be used by international forces against the Na threat, Shinguji responds with an explosion of nationalistic self-justification for his actions. Atargon's sole purpose is to advance the glory of Japan. Shinguji is so consumed by his feelings on this matter that he even ignores the presence of his daughter Makoto, whom he has not seen for 20 years. But it is Makoto who eventually provides Shinguji with the necessary jolt to look beyond his feelings. In a touching scene, father

Right: Director Teoshiro Honda discusses the dramatic confrontation of Shinguji and Makoto with Jun Tazaki and Yoko Fujiyama. This emotionally charged moment is the pivotal scene in the film as father and daughter speak to each other for the first time in 20 years. Tazaki's performance shines here as his character awkwardly tries to make peace with his daughter. The scene as it appears in the finished film is shown on the following page (Atargon composited in the background does not appear as screen).



KAITEI GUNKAN

From the Novel to the Screen

ATARGON finds the roots of its inspiration going back to the turn of the century. The film is based on ideas and characters found in the novel KAITEI GUNKAN (The Undersea Battleship) written by Shusaku Iwano (The 3rd year of the Meiji era (1879)). Oshikawa was born on March 21, 1877 and became one of the most famous authors of his time at an early age. KAITEI GUNKAN was written while the author was a student at Tokyo Senmon Gakuin (Tokyo Professional School, which today is Maseko University). Published by Bungeido, the novel was heralded with the catch phrase, "The Amazing Ocean Adventure!" KAITEI GUNKAN was part of a series of six different stories written by Oshikawa.

KAITEI GUNKAN was actually a contemporary propaganda novel which was written at the time of the Russo-Japanese War, hence it is the Russians who are the enemy in the novel. The ship is called "Dobutai" which means "Dunderberg Ship", and its creator is Captain Shinguji, formerly of the Japanese Imperial Navy. The basic design of the ship is simple and has little change from the book to the film version. (Quoting Oshikawa's narrative:

"...Following them and entering into the dockyard, the view got much wider abruptly. There, the inside of a great curved shell (length and width were outstanding, I could see gigantic walls of seemingly carved stone) surrounding us. There had to be 20 or 30 feet of the ship that was underwater... My heart throbbed, but once I tried to observe the body. How could such a strange, heavily armored ship exist anywhere in the world?... The length of the undersea battleship was 40 meters, 7 meters in width, and the shape of the ship looked like a green javelin such as that of a submarine in southern India which kills great elephants or forest tigers in a single strike. Both ends formed an unusual acute angle. At the bow was an oval bridge near the bow, and it had nothing but one single post on the top."

The theme of nationalism pervades the book as well as the film. Though in the book Shinguji's character is looked upon as an unscrupulous self-imposed exile from society who holds very highly the values of the ancient Samurai code in addition to strong nationalistic feeling. His contemporaries do not share his views and ostracize him. Operating from a secret base on a small South Pacific island which serves as both factory and base for his special marine forces, Shinguji strikes against his enemies via remote style. The Dobutai has a drill built into the bow, but its sole purpose is for use in ramming and sinking other ships.

By now, the above story might sound somewhat familiar to science fiction fans. The idealistic outcast who is a scientist, a super submarine which he uses to run his fleet, the secret island base—all elements of one of the most famous science fiction novels of all time, Jules Verne's 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA. With Oshikawa an aspiring young writer of 22, it would seem no surprise that he would draw upon the work of one of his era's most famous authors for inspira-



海底軍艦

井川 勇 著

ation. He kept dramatic continuity with Verne's story but added some uniquely Japanese elements and shifted the story to contemporary Japan, making a novel which a Japanese readership could more readily relate to.

KAITEI GUNKAN has been reprinted many times since Oshikawa's death in 1915, most currently in serial format by Tokusha in Japan, though without rubi which are Japanese "kana" or alphabet characters that give the pronunciation of kanji characters. For the Japanese reader, the story contains a special element not shown when read without rubi. Another recent version, with rubi to make reading easier, was published by Bungeido during November 1974 in the 4th edition of "Series of Republished Masterpieces—Japanese Juvenile Literature Library". This is a very rare edition. Unfortunately, no known translation of this book into English has ever been published.

The transition from book to screen owes much to Shigeru Kosetsuwaki, a brilliant illustrator who worked as a designer for Toho Studio in the 50's and 60's.

The story of the film KAITEI GUNKAN is actually a hybrid of Shigeru Kosetsuwaki's illustrated story KAITEI GUNKAN (THE UNDERSEA KINGDOM) which was the story of the evil Na Empire and Oshikawa's KAITEI GUNKAN. By inserting the Na Empire as the principal evil force in place of Russia, Toho was able to update the film to contemporary times, introduce fantastic science fiction elements, and evade any possible political controversy. Serving as principal designer for the production, Kosetsuwaki wisely interpreted the Dobutai and brought it to life. As previously mentioned, his basic designs are quite faithful to Oshikawa's description, but Kosetsuwaki decided to make the vessel even more powerful by adding the ability to fly, travel on land, and burrow underground. Though all these powers were to be used in early versions of the story, the ability to move on land was dropped from the finished plan. With its added capabilities, the ship's name was changed from Dobutai to "Gobito-go" ("16,000 power ship") for the film.

One element which did not exist in either Oshikawa's KAITEI GUNKAN or Kosetsuwaki's KAITEI GUNKAN was the monster Manda. Some controversy exists over the origin of Manda and its incorporation into the final screenplay. One version holds that since 1964 was the year of the snake according to the Japanese zodiac, Toho felt it would be appropriate to include a giant snake in celebration of the upcoming year of the snake. Teoshiro Honda has always disputed this version of the story. Another explanation for Manda's presence claims that it was Kenyuki Tanaka who demanded that a giant monster be included in the film just as he had done earlier, putting the monster versus Manda in GORATH. Tanaka felt that a giant monster element was essential to make the film commercially viable and more appealing to the public.



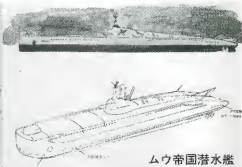
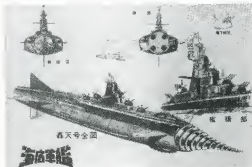
and daughter speak to each other for the first time, and Nakoto rejects her father for turning his back on the world in the name of patriotism. Nakoto's rejection stirs Shinguji to rethink his position, and eventually he commands Atsugao in the climactic assault on the Mu Empire. At the film's conclusion, Shinguji permits the Empress of Mu to escape and swim back to her devastated kingdom, allowing her the opportunity that he regrets never having taken: sharing the fate of one's own nation with dignity and pride, in the true spirit of nationalism.

A great deal of the credit for the success of the drama comes from the strong performances which Honda extracted from his cast. Drawing from the pool of "Toho regulars," Honda wisely tapped Jun Tazaki for the role of Captain Shinguji. Throughout his film career, Tazaki had been chosen to play mostly bit parts as an authoritarian figure such as newspaper editors, police chiefs, or beleaguered military officers. ATsUGAO offered Tazaki a chance at the spotlight—a leading role—and he responded with one of his finest performances. Physically, Tazaki was perfect for the role as his appearance projected an air of authority. Combined with his confident demeanor, he created a character that believably commanded respect from all about him, even from his former commanding officer. Tazaki's portrayal of Capt. Shinguji was emotionally charged—one could feel the years of torment bubbling within the character in the span of but a few moments of screen time. As self-doubt began to creep into the Shinguji character, Tazaki's posture and facial expressions betrayed his

inner conflict better than any dialogue could explain to the audience. All of these things which Tazaki projected, plus a vigorous delivery for his lines, created a powerful performance that even transcends the conversion of the film into dubbed foreign versions.

Ken Uehara was perfectly cast opposite Tazaki as Capt. Shinguji's former commanding officer, the likable Admiral Kosumi. Uehara offered a good counterpoint to Shinguji's strong characterization, playing his own role with great restraint. His actions and mannerisms established the Kosumi character as typical of the "good soldier" who faithfully followed orders, but was relieved to see an end to the vain and foolish war. As a successful shipping magnate, Kosumi had adjusted well to the post-war era and had laid the war to rest in his mind. "The past is forgotten," he compassionately tells Shinguji as the Captain attempts to apologize for his mistake of 20 years previous. Kosumi embodied all the best qualities of a respected leader, including loyalty tempered by reason. Honda uses Uehara's strong character as an effective contrast to Shinguji's militant nationalism.

The remainder of the cast provides commendable support for the central characters. Tadao Takashima plays the freelance photographer who accidentally falls into the middle of the Mu conflict, providing the usual heroic love interest with Shinguji's daughter. As such, his performance is rather likable. The Empress of Mu is brought to life by Tetsuko Kobayashi, starring in her motion picture debut at the age of 18. Discovered by director Honda while working in a television police



drama, Miss Kobayashi devised all of the makeup for her character by herself. Yu Fujiki supplies comedy relief as usual in the role of the photographer's inept assistant, and the remainder of the cast is populated by familiar Toho faces.

Akira Ifukube, Toho's premier science fiction film composer, delivers a distinctive, exciting musical score for ATRACON. Ifukube's scores have always been quite popular among Japanese fantasy film fans, though many of his themes seem to be reorchestrations or derivative of a few basic melodies. However, ATRACON offers a score that is not only diverse in its content, but its themes are largely unique among Ifukube's SF themes. The score for ATRACON contains four basic themes:

1. **Atragon's Theme**—Ifukube's greatest talent in film scoring is his composition of powerful and stirring themes, and Atragon's theme ranks among Ifukube's finest in this category. The theme features brass and woodwinds backed by the relentless beat of percussion in a military march. Played at a loud ponderous pace, this theme serves as the film's main title. The second and undeniably best usage of this is the sequence involving Atragon's initial test run. The super submarine is introduced in dry dock by a few long, grand notes by the brass. The launch commences as the theme picks slowly along, building in anticipation of Atragon's maiden voyage. As Atragon is about to surface, a shimmering cythral builds to a crescendo, and a lively tempoed version of the theme brings the vessel to the surface. The theme intensifies as Atragon not only surfaces but begins to rise into the air, triumphantly culminating as the ship begins to fly. This particular piece of scoring is extremely effective at pacing the scene as well as adding great dramatic impact. The combination of Ifukube's score with Eiji Teuburaya's superb effects here makes Atragon's launch one of the most unforgettable moments in Japanese science fiction, leaving the viewer as much in awe as the characters on screen who witness the launch. A third version of Atragon's theme is used as the ship breaks free from the destroyed dry dock and flies into action against the Mu Empire. Again, the tempo of the music creates the mood of the scene—the theme starts slowly and rapidly builds as Atragon struggles to break free of its prison, giving way to an upbeat and triumphant march as Atragon races off to engage the Mu threat. The final version of Atragon's theme occurs during the climactic assault on the Mu Empire. The pace is urgent as the string section beckons Shinguyji's strike force to complete their mission.

2. **Theme of the Mu Empire**—The ancient Mu Empire is aptly represented by an imperial, ritualistic theme. Using mainly percussion and woodwinds to evoke the aura of an ancient civilization, this theme serves as a background to the introduction of the Mu Empire, adding a porosity befitting the arrogant race. With the introduction of a chorus which chants a prayer to their god Manda, the theme is used for the ceremonial dance in the Mu throne room. Scenes such as these were common to early Toho films as an attempt to add a touch of epic scale. A poignant version of the Mu theme surfaces at the film's conclusion—a lonely, lamenting trumpet plays this theme as the Empress burles herself into the sea to die with her people.

3. **Threat of the Mu Empire**—Used to convey the mystery and danger of the Mu Empire, this theme begins deliberately with ominous strings which build slowly in volume and pace, leading up to a crescendo of brass. Variations of this suitably evil-sounding theme appear throughout the film—the kidnapping in the opening sequence, the sinking of the ocean liner, and the struggle on the beach with the Mu agent. The best use of this theme is the scoring of the Red Satan's ill-fated encounter with the Mu forces. Skillful changes in pace and volume add excitement to the chase, ending with a blaring note of triumph for the Mu race as the Earth forces are crushed by water pressure. The piece concludes with a lingering note of anxiety at the defeat of the surface world. When the Mu Empire begins its final offensive on the surface world, Ifukube adds organ chords to the theme to create a more sinister

sound. However, the effect does not work well, instead sounding reminiscent of overdone villainous music from a silent movie. A final version of this theme, played by subdued woodwinds and strings, accompanies Atragon's battle with Manda.

4. **Makoto's Theme**—Saved for the film's most dramatic moments is Makoto's theme—a poignant combination consisting of strings accentuated by delicate bell chimes. When Shinguyji makes his initial screen entrance, a momentary absence of music helps build the anticipation as the Captain becomes visible through the windows for a second. The theme begins as Shinguyji enters the room, not only as a proud soldier, but also as a father who gazes upon his daughter for the first time in 20 years. The contrast of such strong emotion with this understated theme heightens the dramatic impact of the scene. This theme is used in a similarly effective manner when Makoto expresses her anger to her father over his warped nationalistic thinking.

Given the superb nature of the score which Ifukube composed for ATRACON, his effort seems doubly impressive considering the fact that he was assigned the task of delivering a complete score within a few days time. Using only his copy of the shooting script as a guide, Ifukube composed basic themes for the various scenes, and the visuals were edited to fit the musical cues (quite the reverse of normal film scoring where the music is cued to the visuals). Altogether, 40 minutes and 22 seconds of music were recorded, resulting in a little less than half of the film's running time containing musical background. Ifukube has always been economical in his use of music in keeping with his philosophy for film scoring: the visuals should carry the story, and only the important scenes require music.

Pressured by an imminent release date less than three months away, Eiji Teuburaya was given charge of a team of 160 special effects technicians. This team was divided into two groups, each working under the supervision of different unit directors. Given the time constraints of the schedule, the number of special effects scenes planned had to be cut back and some production values had to be compromised, much to Teuburaya's regret.

Eiji Teuburaya, who had been an aspiring young aviator since his childhood days when he attended the Japan Flying School of Museda, always maintained his dreams to soar in the sky. Whenever his career related to the sky and to flight, as was the case with ATRACON, his work showed unusual passion and creativity. Numerous





examples of such creativity come to mind—the elegant flight of Rodan or Mothra, the amazing space battles of THE MYSTERIANS, etc. One of Tezuka's most impressive aerial feats was for the film TAIHUYO NO TSUBASA (WINGS OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN—1963). Over 120 miniature Shiden-kai interceptors of the Imperial Navy were filmed in flight—the scene was no elaborate that the staff took three days to suspend the model planes on wires and to establish the intricate lighting. Tezuka had a great desire to bring the stories of KAGUYA HIME (PRINCESS KAGUYA—a fable about a princess in heaven who longed for her lover to fly through the skies to meet her) and KIPPON HIKOKI YAMU (JAPANESE FELLOWS IN THE SKY—about the first Japanese aviators) to the screen someday. Tezuka's enthusiasm for aviation and air travel shone forth in his films, and ATRAGON offered him another chance to soar in the skies, even if just vicariously.

Whereas other Toho films such as THE MYSTERIANS, BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE, and LATITUDE ZERO featured the battles of super scientific weapons, ATRAGON was the only Toho-produced film to feature a mechanism/weapon as the central point of the drama. The ship itself holds a strong fascination for fans of the film. Despite the film's flaws, the film is unforgettable, owing much to the appeal of the ship itself. Atragon's original design was taken from images developed by Shigeru Komatsuaki. Blueprints of the ship for use in model construction were drafted by Yoshio Inoue, and Akira Watanabe supervised the construction of miniatures from the blueprints.

Five different scales of miniature Atragons were constructed for various stages of six filming, each of

which had operating drills. The largest was built at 5 meters in length (1/30th scale, approx. 16.4 feet) and was made for Toho by a real shipbuilding company for the extravagant price of ¥1,500,000. This version was fully operational with wings, fins, gun targets, the bridge, and the drill all movable by remote radio control devices built into the ship. This model was large enough for a technician to lie inside the hull and manually operate some of the ship's movable parts. Other models of the super submarine were built to lengths of 3 meters (1/50 scale), 2 meters (1/75 scale), 1 meter (1/150 scale), and 30cm (1/500 scale). Altogether, two models of each of these scales were built except for the 30cm version, of which five were built. The 30cm model was used mainly in water tank shots to depict Atragon cruising on the surface of the ocean. A small mechanical arm was attached to the ship beneath the water line, providing the ship mobility from a source outside the camera's vantage point. Like all of its larger counterparts, this model was not self-buoyant. Without support from underneath, the model would capsize or sink. The 30cm was also used almost exclusively in publicity stills of the ship.

Manda, the monster-god of the Mu Empire, was the creation of screenwriter Shinichi Sekizawa. The name "Manda" was derived from a combination of the Japanese words "man", which stands for the number 10,000, and "da" which means snake. Literally, Manda means the 10,000 (meter) snake. The visualization of Manda was handled by Riji Tezuka himself, who altogether had 10 different size Manda models built. The scale for these models varied from a maximum of 5 meters to a minimum of 20cm in length. Each model was a marionette, brought to life through the manipulation of wires attached to the body. Unfortunately, these puppet effects did not work very convincingly on screen. Each scene of Manda swimming underwater looks just like what it is—a puppet suspended by wires, clumsily bouncing along. Although the movements of the puppets would have appeared more fluid and natural had they been attempted in a water tank, this approach was abandoned in favor of shooting the puppets on a soundstage. Water pressure would have made the actions of Manda unpredictable and impossible to control. So, smoke and camera filters were used to simulate the underwater environment on the set. Manda's attack against Atragon was filmed almost completely in closeup using the 2 meter model. Tight shots were used to conceal the fact that the miniature ship was being propped up by bricks placed atop two stools, giving the model stability while the Manda puppet was being wrapped around it. Only the 5 meter class Manda achieved any degree of realism—this was used in medium shots of Manda pursuing the escaping divers and for a few moments as the beast coils around Atragon. This model was the only one built with a radio controlled jaw. Each Manda model was sufficiently different looking so as to be rather distracting

Top: Riji Tezuka, seen holding one of the 30cm scale models of Atragon, discusses a scene with his technical staff. Meetings of this nature were regularly held during which the script and storyboards served as central points for brainstorming sessions on how best to achieve certain effects. Filming six was definitely a team effort, with miniature makers, lighting, art, cinematographers, and wire workers all contributing. Right: Manda swims toward Atragon, an effect achieved entirely without the use of a water tank. Here a large-scale puppet is suspended by wires from high above the set, attacking the 2-meter class Atragon (also suspended from overhead wire work). Stage-generated smoke helps to diffuse the lighting so that a murky underwater atmosphere can be replicated on the set. Additionally, plastic sheets were waved in front of the stage lights to simulate the reflection of sunlight on the surface of the ocean. The particular setup shown in the photo to the right appears in the finished film as an extreme long shot as Atragon heads for its attack on the 50 power chamber. Unfortunately, the realism of this scene is somewhat lacking as the puppet clumsily wobbles along. Although the on-the-set technique allowed more control over the direction of the prop, the manner in which it moved seemed to negate the advantages of directional control.

when changes were made from shot to shot. The larger models had well-defined facial features that appeared adequately sinister, but the smaller versions were all equipped with heads much too flat and rounded in comparison to the rest of the body. Another distressing feature on the smaller models was the fact that the head wobbled much too loosely at the neck joint, destroying any potential for realism.

All in all, Manda's appearances in the film are a disappointment. Certainly, Manda was written into an important spot in the script, and the encounter between Manda and Atragon should have been one of the film's highlights. Instead, Manda is less than one expects, the battle is very tame, and Manda is defeated in a poorly executed scene where the monster flops clumsily around, the wire clearly visible attached to its head.

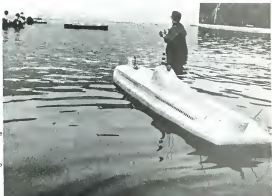
The most intricate special effects scenes in ATRAGON involved the Mu Empire attack on Tokyo. The destruction of the Tokyo business district required that the Ginza and Marunouchi areas be reproduced in miniature at 1/20 scale. The buildings were made of plaster, and only a handful were made with internal steel structures (these buildings were intended to partially survive the destruction). The entire set was built atop a raised platform which not only allowed for low angle photography of the miniatures, but this also facilitated its destruction. Upon completion of model construction, stagehands crawled under the platform and partially cut through the main supports. Ropes were tied to each support, and all the ropes were attached to the bumper of a truck. To simulate the destruction of an earthquake, a technician merely got into the truck and drove away on one, causing the miniature city to collapse. Six automatic remote controlled cameras shot the scene simultaneously from various locations, offering the editor numerous angles of the same shot from which to choose, not to mention a chance to prolong the on-screen time for this special effect. Although the technique of using multiple cameras was not uncommon, ATRAGON was the first Japanese film to use remote control cameras in this manner. The finished effect, filmed in high-speed, is quite realistic.

The spectacular attack by the Mu submarine on Tokyo Bay was done in a 100 centiares (10,764 square foot) water tank located outdoors on the Toho back lot. Ten miniature tankers were constructed, each to a different scale, maximum scale being 1/20 and the smallest at 1/100. These ships were distributed in the water tank so as to create a forced perspective, adding greater depth to the scene than the confines of the water tank would normally allow. Since the scene was shot with high-speed photography for a greater degree of realism, a great amount of light was required for filming. Natural sunlight was used, but the proper lighting balance was very difficult to achieve. The sun was sufficiently bright for filming only between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m., so preparations were made from sunrise to ready the set for a tight afternoon shooting schedule. Again, six automatic remote control cameras shot the scene simultaneously as six miniature ships exploded in sequence. Conventional cel animation was used to add the Mu Empire's destructive ray to the live action. The total effect of the attack is breathtakingly realistic as fireballs consume the tankers and Tokyo Bay is converted into a blazing inferno.

As briefly touched upon earlier, one of the highlights in the film is the trial run of Atragon. Using an indoor water tank with a miniature shore line placed in front of a huge curved backdrop painting, the scene was shot in three different cuts. Each cut used a different scale miniature ship. The initial scene showing Atragon surfacing was done in long shot by Eiji Tsuburaya without any composition. The 5 meter model was used to express the illusion of incredible maneuverability as the ship rises magnificently in the water tank. The model was attached to an underwater crane which forced the ship through to the surface of the pool. To achieve the highest possible realism, high-speed photography

was used with the camera cranking at 10 times normal speed. But Atragon not only surfaces, it begins to rise from the water. As the ship begins to fly, the 2 meter model, suspended by wires, is also filmed at high speed. Water drips gracefully from the hull as six jets located on the ship's underside separate the waters below, creating an effective illusion of upward propulsion. The final cut of the scene utilizes the 1 meter class miniature to depict Atragon slowly flying forward in long shot. Again, the model is suspended by wires and shot in high speed. The ship banks slowly and smoothly as the drill is activated by remote control. The stunning visuals of this scene, combined with Ifukube's vibrant music, create a scene that remains to this day one of the finest achievements in Japanese science fiction.

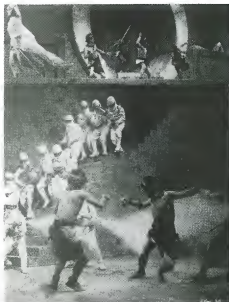
ATRAGON employed the use of matte paintings sparingly, with the resultant effects ranging from the exceptional to the painfully obvious. The most unusual use of the matte painting technique occurred when Shingaji's strike team uses their freeze rays against attacking Mu soldiers. As the freezing gas touches its victims, the actors become motionless and the scene dissolves into a matte



Above: Setting up the Tokyo Bay destruction in Toho's outdoor water tank. A 5-meter model of the anurophagus-like Mu submarine (with Manda ray projector attached to the bow) is positioned as technicians (upper left) rig explosive charges on miniature tankers. Note the widely varying scale of the ships, which when filmed, create a forced perspective.

Below: The finishing touches are put on the intricate miniatures of the Ginza and Marunouchi districts. Steam jets positioned beneath the stage are also tested before actual filming commences.





painting of the frozen soldiers. This makes for a unique though not particularly convincing effect. An extremely effective matte painting shows the drill nose of Atragon protruding from a partially destroyed wall in the Mu power chamber. The painting is combined with live action footage of Shirogami's strike team rushing into action. The painting has nice perspective, the matte line separating the painting from the live action element is well concealed, and both the grain and color of each element match evenly.

The climactic attack against the Mu Empire, which should have been the film's visual high point, instead comes off as a bit one-sided and somewhat unsatisfactory. Atragon makes a grand entrance, bursting through the walls of the Mu power chamber. This effect was achieved by having stagehands manually push the 1 meter class model through the side of the miniature set. However, the interior design of the Mu power chamber was rather bland and the miniature power generators were especially flat looking. These miniatures were photographed at normal speed and as such do not display any sense of scale or realism.

The immense wall of smoke and flames which erupts from the explosion of the Mu power chamber was created using a simple but effective technique. The scene was shot in a small water tank against which a camera was secured upside down beneath the water line. A sky backdrop was placed behind the water, and colored paints were poured into the water, creating billowing, smoke-like clouds. The anacrophagus submarines of the Mu Empire which were destroyed here were merely 20cm models built to float upside down in the water tank. The ice flow in which the submarines were trapped prior to their demise was made of paraffin.

With a fine script and some excellent visuals to its credit, it was unfortunate that the hurried nature of ATRAGON's production caused so much compromise in the quality of certain effects. Matte photography, always a Toho headache, suffered greatly from blue bleed-through and blue halo images which belie an ill-fitting matte. Atragon's zero cannon used a powdery

snowspray substance shot from the drill, a totally unconvincing effect. One of Toho's finely animated rays would have been a far more appropriate technique for the zero cannon, but time did not permit this to be done except for one brief scene.

The most annoying and probably most unnecessary sfx defect was the use of normal speed photography for some miniature scenes, especially those in the dry dock. After taking great pains to construct elaborate and detailed miniature sets, the illusion of size and depth is lost without high-speed photography. Shooting at high speeds requires a great deal more light intensity which in turn generates a lot of heat on the set. While such heat often proves unbearable for actors in monster suits, resulting in some concessions by the director on their behalf, ATRAGON was not burdened by such considerations. The painful consequences of using normal speed photography are best illustrated by Atragon's escape from the destroyed dry dock. As the ship moves to freedom, the miniature debris covering it shifts and tumbles very quickly and unnaturally, ruining any possibility for believability of the effect.

Set design for ATRAGON was pretty much of standard caliber for a Japanese film—nothing spectacularly intricate, just some simple designs that were adequate for their purposes. The largest set piece in the film involved the ceremonial dance in the Mu throne room. This set was built inside Toho Soundstage No. 11, the largest on Toho's backlot. An elaborate backdrop which measured 30 feet high and 120 feet long was made for long shots of the Empress and her court overseeing the Mu ritual. The royal contingent was placed on a small platform with the pillars, balcony, and antechambers all painted in perspective onto the backdrop. The chamber was filled with 600 male and female dancers who were choreographed in the ceremonial dance of Manda.

Among the various props used in ATRAGON, the most unique were the aqualungs utilized by Mu Empire agents. They were built at a cost of ¥70,000 each, with an additional charge of ¥100,000 to Toho for custom design of the unit. Altogether, 30 such aqualungs were made, and each unit was fully functional for underwater use.

In total, a little more than 70 million yen was spent in the construction of miniatures, props, and special sets. Considering the scale of the production, the budget was somewhat conservative in comparison to stellar films.

As the film neared the release date, Toho's enthusiasm for the film's prospects grew as evidenced by the elaborate publicity campaign mounted by the studio. ATRAGON was part of a six film blitz by Toho for the holiday season. Twice as many advertising materials were produced for ATRAGON than for any of the other five films released at the same time. Promotional materials included seven different style posters, a press sheet, Toho photo news, flags, Atragon lanterns, a comic story, special issue of Toho Shishun (newspaper), matches, a cut-out Atragon, set of 12 color stills, commuter tiecloths, New Year's cards, a Toho New Year poster, advertising notes for theater owners, and Toho Studio Mail. The film was treated as a spectacle with the posters proclaiming, "A fearful threat from a mysterious undersea kingdom! Shouldering the expectations of the whole world, the invincible battleship is now sailing forth!" Other ads heralded, "Defeating a giant monster, the invincible battleship charges undersea! Her aim is the undersea kingdom!"

The trailer prepared for the film was fast-paced and enjoyable. Consisting of quick cuts, all of the best effects scenes are glimpsed between introductions for all the film's stars. During its two minute and ten second running time, the spectacle of ATRAGON is emphasized by featuring footage of the Tokyo earthquake, the Tokyo Bay destruction, the best shot of Manda attacking Atragon, and Shirogami's assault on the Mu power chamber. Atragon's amazing powers are demonstrated with scenes of the ship flying, drilling into the Earth, and streaking through the ocean. The grandeur of the Mu Empire is emphasized with scenes of the throne room ceremony. The trailer very effectively combines all of

ATRAGON SPFX GRAFFITI



TOP: The two meter class Atragon is lowered into the outdoor water tank to film the final attack on the Mu Empire.

MIDDLE: Atragon in Shinguji's dry dock, advancing towards the launch chamber. The three meter class Atragon, with a retractable bridge, is used for this scene. The dry dock miniature shows great attention to detail, featuring complex girder work, power generators, work stations, stairs, scaffolding, cranes, etc. The explosive used to destroy the dry dock was so powerful that a studio light was knocked from its stand by the blast, hurling it down upon the submarine along with the other miniature debris.

BOTTOM: The three meter class model is attached to an underwater platform in preparation for shooting Atragon surfacing after its assault on the Mu Empire. This set up was done in the indoor water tank. The mobility of the models in the water tanks depended entirely on support from beneath the water line as some of the models was self-buoyant.



TOP: Kaji Tezuka positions the 5-meter class Honda for a closeup as the monster coils around the hull of Atragon.

Note the Atragon model propped atop a stool.

MIDDLE: Atragon flies over the flaming graveyard that is Tokyo Bay. The three meter class model is suspended by overhead wire works while power is supplied by cable to activate the drill and frozen gas jets located on the bottom of the hull. Frozen gas was also used on the 2-meter class model to simulate its upward propulsion. Because of the power cable, a traveling matte was required to show Atragon in long shot over Tokyo Bay. A medium closeup of the ship was also used here (without showing the cable, of course) to depict Atragon about to land in Tokyo Bay.

BOTTOM: Kaji Tezuka sets up the camera as model makers touch up the Mu city miniature. Strands of cloth are attached to wires so technicians on the set can see (and avoid) the wires.

Shigeru Komatsuzaki ATRAGON'S Visual Designer

Toho science fiction films have been famous for producing some exciting mechanical designs for their futuristic hardware—massive canoes from *WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS*, sleek metal spacecraft from *BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE*, the atomic heat ray from *HUSH*, the sophisticated Markelike VARD from *THE MUSTANGS*, etc. The man responsible for designing these and many other wonders was Shigeru Komatsuzaki. Now 63 years old, he is still active today as an illustrator, working on designing book covers and record jackets. During his film design career at Toho, he would be given a copy of the script, and after some discussions with Eiji Yoshikawa and his staff, the mechanical concepts for the production would be devised and illustrated. These designs would then be discussed by the creative team and turned over to the set designers, model makers, and costumers for execution.

Komatsuzaki's ability to design exciting yet functional-looking mechanical concepts can be traced back to his early days. Having studied physics and electronics, he was assigned during World War II as part of a team which performed numerous experiments in laser technology. Although his work involved a very low intensity beam (so weak in fact that it took 10 minutes of exposure just to annoy a small mouse), such background and experience with real life mechanisms and weapons such as this provided him with the ability to draw his designs from reality.

The original concept for Komatsuzaki's *Atargon* design certainly found its basis in Shunro Oshikawa's novel, but the concept of its increased powers and size stemmed in part from his participation in a Japanese naval project during World War II concerning a gigantic airborne bomber. This craft, called *FUJIKU*, was to be able to fly enormous distances at great speeds and drop a huge payload of bombs. However, the project never got past the planning stages before the war ended. One cannot help but draw a parallel here between this story and the script of *ATRAGON*—plan for a super-weapon abandoned at the end of the war, a plan that Shijapji follows through on in his quest to restore Japan's prestige.

Shigeru Komatsuzaki also illustrated a re-written *KAITAI GUNKAN* (by Shunro Oshikawa) for younger children as part of the "Complete Literature of the World for Boys and Girls", published by Shogakukan in 1955.



Shigeru Komatsuzaki
1966

Top left: One of Shigeru Komatsuzaki's storyboards, showing the *Atargon* banking slowly during its test flight.

Bottom left: Detailed blueprints of the super submarine *Atargon* which feature a cutaway diagram of the ship's layout.

Above: Conceptual paintings done by Shigeru Komatsuzaki in 1966 to illustrate a proposed film project which was inspired by the success of *ATRAGON*. The story, written by Shinichi Sekizawa and Yoshinori Wada, involved a huge flying fortress called *U.S. Space Navy Battleship 'Super Noah'*. This enormous ship, seen above, was to spearhead Earth's defense against the evil 'Noah' syndicate whose flying saucers were to engage the *Super Noah* in a spectacular aerial battle. Some of these paintings were used to illustrate the SF novel *NOE EARTH* (above left).

See also page 20 for Shigeru Komatsuzaki's final draft illustrations for the *Atargon* and the *U.S. submarines*, and page 18 for an early Komatsuzaki publicity painting for *KAITAI GUNKAN*.



the above elements to achieve its goal—it makes the viewer want to see this film. The trailer used music from *VARAN*, *KING KONG VS. GODZILLA*, and *BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE* to add an exciting feel (Ifukube's score had not yet been recorded at the time the trailer was produced). The editor for the ATRAGON trailer was Okiharu Kajita who later was to direct some episodes of the Tsuburaya Productions TV show *ULTRA Q*.

The week before the film was to be released, an announcement was broadcast in theaters to be showing ATRAGON: "Ladies and gentlemen, we strongly thank you for coming to this theater. We will now inform you about KAITAI GUNKAN (ATRAGON), a full-length color feature starting in this theater on the 22nd of next week. Directed by Inoshiro Honda in the live action, Eiji Tsuburaya in the special effects, this feature is a spectacular entertainment in which science and adventure's spirit are skillfully mixed. We believe that the battle between a nuclear powered battleship which flies in the sky, runs on the ground, sails on the sea, and dives beneath the water, and an undersea kingdom which tries to conquer the lands will live up to your expectations. The stars are Tadao Takashima, Yoko Fujiyama, Yu Fujiki, Hiroshi Koizumi. It is a spectacle three years in the planning. Next week, please come with your family and friends to enjoy this feature, KAITAI GUNKAN, which is filled with the magic of special effects, Toho's specialty, and is the super spectacle entertainment of adventure and dreams." Such announcements are commonplace in Japanese theaters, and this one is quite entertaining compared to the flat, wearisome ones these days. No doubt this announcement left patrons eager to return the following week to see ATRAGON.

KAITAI GUNKAN was released to Japanese theaters on December 22, 1963 and was greeted by enthusiastic audience response. The film ran for little more than a month and was Toho's top money maker for the holiday season. It was later reissued in 1968 as a co-feature on a double bill which featured the Japanese premiere of *DESTROY ALL MONSTERS*. In subsequent years, KAITAI GUNKAN has appeared frequently in Toho revival festivals and midnight movie screenings—a testimony to the film's enduring popularity. The film was also Toho's first science fiction film released on pre-recorded video in 1982.

KAITAI GUNKAN reached American shores in short order as seen to be the case with most Japanese science fiction in the 1960's. American International picked up the film and released it in 1964 under the title ATRAGON. This title came from Toho's overseas promotional material (the title contained therein was actually AYDRAGON, which in the phonetic pronunciation in Japanese for the word Atragon) instead of being dressed up by someone in the AIP marketing department. The common perception in Japan is that the word "Atragon" was a combination of the words "Atlantis" and "Dragon", with the film's title referring to Honda as the "Atlantis Dragon". If this was Toho's intent, the people at American International did not see it that way—they named the submarine Atragon. Most Japanese fans are surprised to find that the Gothen-go (the Japanese name for the ship), and not Manda, is called Atragon in our version.

As with other 1960's Toho films released by AIP, ATRAGON benefitted greatly from the quality dubbing job done by Titra Studios. Successful dubbing depends on whether or not the viewer can believe that the screen actor is actually speaking in his/her own voice. By selecting voice actors that not only read their parts extremely well, but whose voices also matched the screen actor's physical appearance, Titra succeeded where so many others had failed. The quality of the dubbing was especially important to a film like ATRAGON in which the drame was a prominent feature.

The trademark of American International in the 1960's was their ability to develop exciting advertising campaigns, and their work on ATRAGON was no exception. The poster art featured the submarine crashing through the seabed into the Mu Empire as Shinguji's soldiers



Tetsuo Kobayashi portrays the evil Empress of Mu in her film acting debut at age 18, seen here sitting on her throne presiding over the ceremonial dance of Manda. Her acting career lasted through the early 70's at which time she semi-retired. The returned to acting in the 1982 TV film *GO-KUISO*, her ambition now to appear some day in a Broadway play.

battled Mu agents, and banner headlines promised fantastic sights. An exciting Technicolor trailer was made which touted the "9 amazing powers of Atragon". Though the viewer is never told what these 9 amazing powers are, this technique succeeds nonetheless in piquing the viewer's interest. The trailer prominently features all of the film's highlights, deftly edited to Ifukube's exciting Atragon theme. The trailer showed more than enough to whet the appetite of every kid in the audience, ensuring that they would rush back the following week to see the film.

Shortly after ATRAGON's successful release, Toho became interested in producing another feature of a similar nature. Shigeru Komatsu was assigned to develop a large scale project based on a concept by Eiji Tsuburaya. In October 1966, Komatsu produced some illustrations of his original images for a screenplay written by Shinichi Sekizawa and Yoshinori Wada. The plot involved a super flying battleship called "Super Noah" confronting the evil syndicate of Moo which planned to take over the world. Though this project never progressed past the screenplay treatment, some of its elements served as an influence on Tsuburaya's later TV series *MIGHTY JACK*. This treatment also became the basic starting point from which Toho's *LATITUDE ZERO* was developed three years later.



CONQUERS THE WORLD!

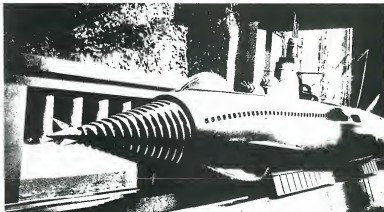


AN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PICTURE. Produced by TOHO Co. Ltd.

Inoshiro Honda



Eiji Tsuburaya



KAITEI GUNKAN
A Toho International Production
Eastman Color and Toboscope
Released December 22, 1963
Running Time: 1 hour 34 minutes

CAST

Captain Shingoji.....Jun Tazaki
Admiral Kousui.....Ken Uehara
Susumu Hatanaka.....Taduo Takashima
Makoto Shinguji.....Yoko Fujiyama
Yoshito Nishibe.....Yu Fujiki
Empress of Nu.....Tetsuo Kobayashi
Nu Agent #23.....Akihiko Hirata
Journalist/Nu Agent.....Kenji Sahara
Amato.....Yoshihumi Tajima
Professor.....Hiroshi Koizumi
High Priest of Nu.....Kisei Asanoto

CREDITS

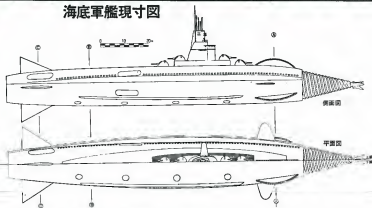
Executive Producer.....Tomoyuki Tanaka
Director.....Inoshiro Honda
Screenplay.....Shinichi Sekizawa
Original Story.....Shunro Ishikawa
Director of Special Effects.....Eiji Tsuburaya
Photography.....Hajime Koizumi
Production Designer.....Shigeru Komatsuzaki
Music.....Akira Ifukube

JUN TAZAKI (real name: Minoru Tanaka) was born in Aomori Prefecture in 1913. He graduated from the Aomori Shogyo (Commercial) College in 1927 and shortly thereafter moved to Tokyo where he became a stage actor. After working with many different theater troupes, he took a role in the 1948 film NIKUTAI-SO MON (GATE OF THE FLESH). Thus started Tazaki's career in the movies which has continued to this day, including an appearance in the acclaimed JIGOKU-MON (THE GATE OF HELL). As a contract actor for Toho in the 50's and 60's, Tazaki appeared in numerous science fiction/fantasy productions. His credits include THE THREE TREASURES, GORATH, KING KONG VS. GODZILLA, ATRAGON, GODZILLA VS. THE THING, DOGORA THE SPACE MONSTER, FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD, MONSTER ZERO, WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS, GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER, and DESTROY ALL MONSTERS.

KEN UEHARA was born in 1909 in Kagoshima Prefecture, his real name Kiyosuke Ikebara. He graduated as an Economics major from Rikkyo University. He joined the Shochiku Film Company as an actor in 1935, making his debut in KARE-TO KANOJO-TO SHONEN-TACHI (HE, SHE, AND THE BOYS). He won popularity among young girls by co-starring with Kimyo Tanaka in AIZOU KATSURA (JUDAS TRESS OF LOVE). His recent pictures include MURAKATA KYOGAI (MURAKATA SISTERS). Uehara has appeared in four Toho special effects films: MOTHRA, GORATH, THE LAST WAR, and ATRAGON.



海底軍艦現寸圖



ATRAGON MECHANIC DESIGN

ATRAGON STATISTICS

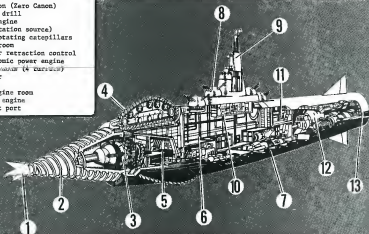
Length: 150 meters (492 feet)
 Weight: 10,000 tons
 Speed:
 In the air: Mach 2
 Undersea: 50 knots
 Underground: 12 1/4 mph
 Surface of the sea: 80 knots
 On land: 186 mph

SCHEMATIC DETAIL (see diagram below)

1. Cold ray canon (Zero Canon)
2. Super-strong drill
3. Main power engine
 (Drill rotation source)
4. High speed rotating catapults
5. Main engine room
6. Command tower retraction control
7. Secondary atomic power engine
8. Energy ray cannon (4 barrels)
9. Command tower
10. Command room
11. Secondary engine room
12. Atomic power engine
13. Energy outlet port

POWERS OF ATRAGON

Captain Shinguji's super submarine is an atomic-powered warship with many unique capabilities. As a submarine, the vessel can reach speeds up to 50 knots while diving to extreme depths which no normal submarine can withstand. On the ocean's surface, the vessel can attain the incredible cruising speed of 80 knots. Using air jets located beneath the hull, the Atragon can fly at speeds up to Mach 2 when the fins, bridge, and catapults are retracted. To travel underground, the battleship uses its atomic powered rockcrushing drill to bore through the Earth, crawling along with the aid of catapults built into the hull. On land, Atragon becomes a high speed atomic tank propelled by catapults and jet engines. Its weaponry includes the zero canon, a ray emitted from the drill tip which freezes objects with a vapor of -273°C .



Mein Arkadia im Grunde des Herz

A Chronological History of Captain Harlock

1953 - 1979

by
Mark Rainey

With the animation boom that has been taking place in Japan over the last several years, a multitude of intriguing characters and universes has sprung into existence, from the original SPACE CRUISER YAMATO epic in 1974, to the colorful PHOENIX 2772 in 1979, to the dynamic SUPER DIMENSIONAL FORTRESS MACROSS movie in 1984. Animator/creator Daiji Matsumoto has been a leader in the field during the last decade, having made his biggest commercial impact with the YAMATO series and the TV/film features it inspired. However, following Matsumoto's initial conception of the show's format and characters, based on his earlier comic series, producer Yoshinobu Nishizaki more or less took control of the property, and in the eyes of many, spoiled it by over-commercialization and bureaucratization. In order to maintain more creative control of his own product, Matsumoto decided to develop a show taken from his comic series SPACE PIRATE CAPTAIN HARLOCK. In 1977, with original screenplay by Matsumoto, Tamiya Takera and Kojo Yoichi co-produced a 42 episode animated series by the same name for Toei Studios, holding to his original plotline very closely and keeping his unique ideas and graphic style intact. With CAPTAIN HARLOCK, he found a vehicle with which to illustrate his personal creative goals without the interference of strictly commercially-oriented producers like Nishizaki. Not that CAPTAIN HARLOCK was not a sellable product -- quite the contrary, for with the airing of the original show, the Harlock character gained a large and loyal audience, and became the connecting link for various other Matsumoto projects which were related to the same fictitious universe.

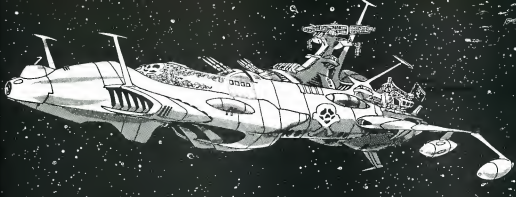
In addition to the original series, Captain Harlock has appeared as either a main or secondary character in the films GALAXY EXPRESS 999, ADIEU GALAXY EXPRESS, and MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA, as well as the follow-up to ARCADIA, the 25 episode series ENDLESS ROAD SSX. As has been the trend with Japanese animation, there are major inconsistencies between the related shows and films, typified by the TV versions of MACROSS and its cinematic counterpart, and the film and television versions of LIESMAN. The Captain Harlock universe is no exception. It would appear that Matsumoto wished to tell a number of stories with similar themes and decided to use Harlock as the binding link, regardless of the diverse nature of the stories' settings. However, for those with an open mind and a complete need for consistency, the producers have formulated a time line that, flawed as it may be, describes a sequence of events with only a few more holes than a block of Swiss cheese.

As a comic feature character, Harlock saw his beginnings in 1953 when Matsumoto penned a Western series for Kingdon Comics that followed the light-hearted adventures of a gunslinger bearing the now well-known skull and crossbones insignia on his shirt. The name of Harlock surfaced again in 1968 in a comic series called EPTA, a futuristic fantasy featuring a character named Doctor Harlock. Making something of a change in his character's nature, Matsumoto created a new serial the next year called AFRIKA SQUADRON, which featured Harlock as the pilot of a Messerschmidt # 109p in a World War II setting, later evolving into PILOT 262 where Harlock's aircraft was replaced by a



Messerschmidt Me 262 jet. In the same year, the original Phantom F. Harlock (the Captain's great-ancestor) was introduced in two separate comic stories called BIRD OF MILANMARAO and THE OWEN STANLEY WITCH (both of which would be used as inspiration for the pre-title sequence of MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA).

A key part of the Harlock universe is the strong relationship between Harlock himself, Teohiro (builder of the ship Arkadia) and Emeraldus, a woman space trader who, like Harlock, becomes a pirate symbolizing the fight for freedom against oppression. This relationship grew out of another western-style series called GUN FRONTIER which ran from 1972 to 1975. Matsumoto clearly has always been fascinated with the combining of elements of the past and future, especially from the days of the old west and from the second World War. Using the wildlands of other planets as a setting, Matsumoto turns them into old western frontiers, most evident in GALAXY EXPRESS and ENDLESS ROAD SSX (in which the wilderness of the planet Heavy Metal is called Gun Frontier). Many of Matsumoto's earliest ideas for the Harlock universe originated with those seemingly unrelated comics, and a remarkable number of his early concepts would show themselves in his later cinematic pieces. One such example that recurs thematically is his apparent fascination for the strong or dominant female character, whether it be the powerful, arrogant Madones from the first HARLOCK series, the tragic Master in GALAXY EXPRESS who represents the definitive mother figure, Emeraldus, the defiant, steel-willed woman pirate, or Yukino Yayoi, the soft-spoken, almost shy, but self-assured benefactor of the Earth in QUEEN MILANMARAO.



The modern Captain Harlock originated in 1974 in the SPACE CRUISER YAMATO comic, in which Susumu Koshi's brother leaves the Earth Defense Force to become the infamous space pirate. He appeared only briefly in this role, then Matsumoto dropped the idea in favor of shifting the time period to the 30th century. Throughout the CAPTAIN HARLOCK TV series, his origins were a mystery, adding a certain dark charisma to the character. Cinematically, GALAXY EXPRESS did give a brief insight into his past, but it was not until MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA in 1982 and ENDLESS ROAD SSX the following year that a detailed study of Harlock's earlier days was made, much of it being taken from the GUN FRONTIER comic and its follow-up SPACE BATTLESHIP DEATHSHADOW (1975).

With so many different comic sources being used as background references, and with so many conflicting or at least divergent storylines from Matsumoto's early works, there is a definite consistency problem between the films and television series. Not, of course, that this has ever swayed the Japanese. The SPACE PIRATE CAPTAIN HARLOCK series is based very closely on the comic with an added subplot focusing on the child Maya who is the daughter of Tochiro and Emeraldus. The better part of the story revolves around the battle with the Mazones is the same in comic and show. The design of the Arcadia in the comic is kept for the TV series, it being an armored space battleship not unlike the Yamato. In earlier comics, like OLIVER ZERO (1976), Harlock piloted the Deathshadow, later seen in GALAXY EXPRESS, and a zepelin-shaped craft similar to the Queen Emeraldus called Death Harlock (sic). The Queen Emeraldus ship in the CAPTAIN HARLOCK comic appears as a crude, capsule-shaped rocket, which was later re-designed to retain its earlier configuration from SPACE BATTLESHIP DEATHSHADOW, a streamlined, camouflaged diabolical with a galleon-shaped undercarriage.

After the CAPTAIN HARLOCK TV series became such a success, it was inevitable that Matsumoto would produce more of his adventures, even though at the end of the series, taking place in the years 2977-2979, Harlock disbands his crew and retires to a somewhat more stable life. As a result, later episodes in Harlock's saga take place at earlier periods of his life, MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA and ENDLESS ROAD SSX representing the earliest chapters and chronicling some of his origins, filmic time being about 2968-2970. There would seem to be some overlap in the time frames of SSX and GALAXY EXPRESS, even though there is a nodicum of conflict in settings and events, mostly relating to the demise of Tochiro and the state of the Earth during the given time period. Some of these points will be dealt with shortly.

At the beginning of MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA, a sequence taking place sometime after World War I introduces Phantom F. Harlock, a German aerial explorer, flying over New Guinea in his biplane, Arcadia. His quest is to fly over the Owen Stanley mountain range, a scene based directly on the Matsumoto comic THE OWEN STANLEY WITCH. Following this, the scene switches to the future, with Captain Harlock piloting the ship Deathshadow full of

refugees attempting to escape Earth which has been occupied by the totalitarian forces of planet Ilmidas. He is caught before he can make his escape, however, and is brought back to Earth. Here he meets Tochiro, another rebel forced to work in the service of the Ilmidas. They become fast friends and vow to fight for the freedom of the Earth. They encounter Emeraldus, a free space trader who joins them in their struggle, all inspired by the voice of Free Arcadia, an underground radio system led by Maya who is known as 'The Boss.' In a battle, Harlock loses his right eye while trying to reach Maya, and shortly thereafter, Tochiro gives him a huge battle cruiser which he has built to fight the aliens. Interestingly, in the film, Tochiro has named the ship Arcadia, whereas in SSX, in a flashback to the film, the dialogue has been re-recorded so that it is Harlock who actually gives the ship its legendary name. As Arcadia leaves the Earth to assist another enslaved race called the Tokargans, Maya and Emeraldus are captured, and we learn that Maya is in reality Harlock's wife. She is killed by the Ilmidas in revenge for Harlock's traitorous acts, and Emeraldus is scarred by a laser bolt striking her face as she battles her would-be executioners. Thence we have the origins of Harlock's eyepatch and Emeraldus' scar. The scar on Harlock's cheek appears hereditary, however, as it seems all of his ancestors were born with one. At the end of the film, Harlock, Tochiro and Emeraldus sail into space vowing never to rest until they have freed the Earth from the Ilmidas.

ENDLESS ROAD SSX takes up immediately where MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA leaves off, with Harlock battling the Ilmidas and joined by a young lad named Tadashi who enlists aboard the Arcadia with his rebel crew. The three main outlaws are given code numbers by the Ilmidas: Harlock = 800999; Tochiro = 800998; Emeraldus = 800001. From these numbers, Tochiro adopts the prefix SSX which is affixed to the title of the show. In this series, Tochiro plays a key role in the story, and it is revealed how his soul ends up inside the Arcadia's main computer, an element prominent in the CAPTAIN HARLOCK TV show. At one point in the story, the Ilmidas have taken Harlock's old ship, the Deathshadow, and used it in battle against him. He shoots it down, and it crash-lands on planet Heavy Metal. Tochiro, however, has specialized equipment on the ship which he tells Harlock is very important. Soon after, Emeraldus is stranded in her damaged ship, and Tochiro is the only one with enough expertise to repair it; however, to get to her, he must pass through a storm of intense radiation, which he does and successfully helps Emeraldus out of danger. In the process, he is fatally poisoned, and returns to the Deathshadow where he activates his special equipment, which transfers his spirit to the computer aboard the Arcadia.

Now, there are no less than three different versions of Tochiro's demise within the whole Harlock saga. In a flashback that takes place in the first HARLOCK TV series, we find Harlock and Tochiro in a prison colony run by the corrupted Earth government. The two revolt and incite a riot among the other prisoners. Tochiro

has secretly built the Arcadia in an underground chamber, and Harlock escapes in it. Again, we meet Emeraldus, who is immediately taken to Tochiro and it is not long before Mayu is conceived. Tochiro's death this time results from his sheer physical exhaustion from overwork. As his body is jettisoned from the Arcadia, Emeraldus joins the drifting capsule in her small spacecraft, saying that death is the goal of all their lives' work and she will remain at Tochiro's side for all time, leading us to believe that she perishes in space. Perhaps she changes her mind out there in the lonely void, however, for she appears quite alive and well in GALAXY EXPRESS. Tochiro's death in GE 999 is remarkably similar to the portrayal in SSX, except that added to the setting is Tetsuro Hoshino, the young hero of the GALAXY EXPRESS story. The death scene again occurs on planet Heavy Metal at the site of the wrecked Deathshadow; in fact, stock footage from GALAXY EXPRESS is used in SSX as Tochiro's spirit bursts from the Deathshadow and instantly activates the Arcadia's main computer. If one has an open enough mind, and is still the nut for consistency he has always been, he might conclude that 999 begins just before SSX ends, and that Tetsuro does not appear in SSX because of union regulations or the like.

In an unpreviewed four-minute short featurette designed to promote ENDLESS ROAD SSX, there are a number of sequences taken directly from GUN FRONTIER and a few other early Matsumoto comics. There also appears to be a battle with the first Mazones to show themselves on Earth, which would be consistent with the fact that in CAPTAIN HARLOCK, we are led to believe that Harlock has had earlier experiences with them. As far as tying any loose ends together, the status of this short is questionable.

With GALAXY EXPRESS having been made two years before MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA and SSX, the latter include ideas that Matsumoto developed in the interim, creating much of the inconsistency that creeps up between the different projects. For example, the Arcadia carries a different crew in SSX than in CAPTAIN HARLOCK, excepting Yuki Kei, the bridge navigator, and the two shows give entirely different stories for her joining the crew. GALAXY EXPRESS and ADIEU GALAXY EXPRESS contain the original crew from CAPTAIN HARLOCK, but reside in the re-designed Arcadia that Matsumoto created for GALAXY EXPRESS and kept for MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA and SSX. So in essence, the original Arcadia design from CAPTAIN HARLOCK is actually a later reimagining when considered according to the filmic chronology. As for the differing crews, one must assume that Harlock dumped his old one somewhere toward the end of the SSX events and took on a new one in time for when he trucked back over to the GALAXY EXPRESS set.

The true forerunner of the GALAXY EXPRESS chapters in Harlock's ongoing story is QUEEN MILLENNIA, a TV series-cum-theatrical feature that displays the same shifting of storylines as all the aforementioned Japanese anime. ADIEU GALAXY EXPRESS relies heavily on the concepts of the 1000 year queen from Planet La Metal to give background for the character of Maeter, an immortal woman from this mysterious planet that drifts through the universe. In this film, Harlock appears once again as the benefactor of Tetsuro as he did in the first film. GALAXY EXPRESS relates the story of Tetsuro's battle against the mechanized empire led by Queen Prometheus who is in reality Maeter's mother. The emphasis for this film is on the relationships between Maeter and her mother and Tetsuro and his mother who is murdered at the film's opening by the evil Count Mecha. The film's climax has Tetsuro and Maeter reluctantly destroying Queen Prometheus, whom they realize has become a genocidal monster who wishes only the conquest of the Earth and humankind by turning men into mechanized servants of her will. This is done by deceit, and those who do not allow themselves to be converted into machines are destroyed by the murderous assassin Count Mecha.

ADIEU GALAXY EXPRESS begins two filmic years after GE 999 ends, with the Earth engaged in a total war with the machine people who still remain loyal to Queen Prometheus even though she is known to have been destroyed. However, Tetsuro again meets Maeter, and he discovers that, not only was the first mechanized planet he helped destroy a clone of the original, but Prometheus's spirit still lives on inside the heart of the primal mecha planet. Harlock

shows up to help Tetsuro do battle with the marshall of Prometheus's forces, a dark figure known as Faust, who also is known to Harlock as a friend from the past. In the end, Harlock must sadly allow Faust and Tetsuro to engage in a duel, which Tetsuro wins, but not before Faust relates that he is Tetsuro's father. The familial bond is now complete, for both Tetsuro and Maeter are relations of those who created the mechanized empire. This relationship is emphasized by the fact that Maeter is actually a spirit inhabiting the body of Tetsuro's mother, a spirit that was once known as Yukino Yayoi, the past Queen of 1000 Years.

In the GALAXY EXPRESS saga, Harlock is a secondary character, yet especially important in ADIEU GALAXY EXPRESS where his presence adds descriptiveness to the complex relationships between characters, especially by his familiarity with Faust, whom we know to be evil but motivated by perhaps once-honorable intentions. The mutual respect Faust and Harlock have for one another heightens the drama when Faust and Tetsuro face off for the final showdown, which is directed with intensity comparable to a Sergio Leone duel. In the end, the mecha planet goes the way of its predecessor, and it now appears that Queen Prometheus is laid to rest once and for all.

Without going into in-depth plot synopses of each chapter in the Harlock series, the purpose of this article has been to tie some of the varying plot elements together as best as Matsumoto's disjointed storylines will allow for those who might not be as familiar with the backgrounds as they are with the stories themselves. Wracking one's brain over so trivial a matter as the historical chronology of Captain Harlock can be a pure joy when one realizes the extent to which these films have attracted and affected the creativity of so many followers. There are multitudes of other specific examples and details which have not been included in this article due in large part to their sheer numbers. Who knows, but there may be a part two to this piece sometime down the road when perhaps even more chapters have been added to the Harlock epic. Until that time, we enthusiasts of the genre can continue to delve into the complicated fabric of the universe of Keiji Matsumoto and still never tire.



The Classical Works of Akira Ifukube

By Bill Gudmundson

The late composer Bernard Herrmann often lamented the fact that most American film composers composed only music for film. Herrmann himself preferred to be considered a "composer who did films," rather than a "film composer." It is ironic that today Herrmann is remembered mainly for his film music. Unfortunately, in this country, classical works of film composers go largely unnoticed by the general public.

Akira Ifukube began writing music for himself long before he composed the background music for the many behemoths and aliens that thundered and plundered their way through Toho's science fiction films. His classical work is almost entirely unknown in this country, with the exception of a few very limited-pressing releases in a series of music by Japanese composers. Even in Japan his non-film work is difficult to come by.

With the current renewed interest in Toho science fiction in Japan, it seems only natural that the music of the movies has come to attention (it should be pointed out that the Japanese release records for nearly every form of entertainment, from radio dramas to the most obscure animated cartoon). Many LPs featuring the scores, and sometimes complete soundtracks including dialogue and sound effects have found their way into record stores throughout Japan. Among this plethora of monster cries and crashing orchestras, a few LPs have appeared that featured the true origins of all this film music -- the classical music of Akira Ifukube. Whether or not the release of classical music is someone's idea of preserving some of the richness of Ifukube's art, or someone's idea of making "a few dollars more," is a point that we shall not address here.

Akira Ifukube was born on May 31, 1914 in the village of Kushiro in Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island. His childhood years were filled with the folk music of the Ainu tribe, an influence which later expressed itself in the "paganish" air of his compositions. In 1932 he enrolled at the University of Hokkaido, where he majored in forestry. The woods soon gave way to woodwinds, however, as Ifukube gave in to his life-long desire to write music. At the age of 19, he composed his first piece *PIANO COMPOSITION*, and began writing his acclaimed *JAPANESE RHAPSODY*.

Self-taught in music, he fulfilled his ambition to become a concert composer. While still at college, he met the famous Japanese composer Fumio Hayasaka, and the two performed together -- Ifukube on violin and Hayasaka on piano. In 1935, his *JAPANESE RHAPSODY* won the Tschereptin Prize, and in 1943, his *SYMPHONIC BALLAD* was awarded the Victor prize.

As is the case with many composers who cannot completely support themselves on purely symphonic works, Ifukube turned to film. He was paid 50,000 yen to complete the score for the 1947 film *END OF THE SILVER PEARL*, but after the various middlemen, this sum was reduced to a paltry 1,000 yen. Ifukube persisted, however, and by 1954 he was an established film composer. Ifukube's philosophy of writing music was that his pieces should "express," not "explain." Due to his rural upbringing, Ifukube always considered himself as "an old country boy at heart," and therefore was not in the least insulted when he was approached in 1954 to do the score for *GODZILLA*, a project which many "proper" composers might turn down. In addition to composing the score, Ifukube also created *Godzilla's* famous roar -- an effect accomplished by rubbing a leather glove across a contrabass.

Ifukube's music, both classical and filmic, speaks in very broad terms, striking very basic chords



within the listener's heart. It harkens back to folk music backgrounds, lacking the subtleties that make up much European classical music. Emotions portrayed are almost always extremes: powerful hatred or all-encompassing love; all-out war or absolute peace. The flavor of his music, while owing much to western forms, retains a distinctly Japanese taste. It is not difficult to picture vast armies of warriors streaming down hills to clash with opposing forces, or to imagine the gleaming blade of a dagger about to lacerate an abdomen in the seppuku ritual, or even the fiery breath and thunderous footsteps of another antediluvian behemoth as it levels Tokyo.

The concert performance of *SYMPHONIC FANTASIA* in 1943 marked 50 years of composing for Ifukube. In that time, he composed 45 classical works as well as countless scores for action pictures. Although he has not produced any new compositions in the last two years, he remains tied to his musical roots by teaching music.



What follows is a brief listing and commentary on the 5 aforementioned LPs.

KING 286-7189 BALLATA SINFONICA (1943)

This lively piece won the coveted Victor Award. The first movement, "Allegro Capriccioso," begins with a quick, almost jaunty melody for strings, which subsides and recurs throughout the movement. The second movement, "Andante Rapsodico," starts out slowly, then builds to a purposeful climax.

JAKO MOKO JANKO - Drumming of Japan (1951)

A very martial prelude sets the tone for this work. As the title suggests, the piece relies heavily on the drum to carry it through. Its military feel sets the tone for much of Ifukube's filmic ventures in the realm of war.

KING 286-7190 SINFONIA TAPKAARA (1954 - revised 1979)

As with many of Ifukube's works, this one opens with a powerful *Allegro* -- almost suggestive of a series of battles. The *Adagio* seems to portray the mourning of the dead -- a few brief riffs from the *Allegro* recalling the glory of fallen heroes. With the final movement, "Vivace," we are again thrown into the fury of battle, this time for a resounding victory, with the theme crashing down upon us in a furious (and loud) finale.

CHORALE ODE - The Sea of Okhotsk (1958)

This work is a chorale reading of a poem by Genzo Sarashina, with orchestral augmentation. It

(Continued on page 37)

GODZILLA MEETS ZONE FIGHTER

THE METEOR MAN

by
Andrew Dabols



RYUSEI NINGUN ZOM (ZONE, THE METEOR MAN) was a superhero TV show produced by STV, broadcasting from April 2 through September 24 of 1973. A typical Ultraman-style ripoff, the show featured simple stories, ridiculous monsters, low budget special effects, lots of action and never-ending battles, and very predictable events on a weekly basis. Though entertaining, this show could easily have been forgotten in the annals of Japanese fantasy if not for the guest appearances on the show of three of Toho's international monster stars: King Ghidorah, Gigan, and the King himself, Godzilla.

In its 26 episode run during the 7:00 - 7:30 PM time slot, the show told of the exploits of the Sakimori family. The Sakimori family are the sole survivors of the planet Peaceland, a planet so named because of its maintenance of and respect for peace. Peaceland has been destroyed by the evil forces of Baron Gorga, a notorious alien who contemplates the domination of the universe by annihilating all peaceful planets. Baron Gorga attacks the planets of peace one by one, using his unique ability to manipulate and control monsters. The Sakimori family escapes the Gorga aliens and migrate to Earth, but Baron Gorga tracks them down and decides to make Earth his next target for conquest.

The three surviving members of the Sakimori family, also known as the Zone Family, are Hikaru, the eldest brother, his sister Kei, and his little brother Akira. Hikaru possesses a special gift—the ability to change into the immense superbeing, Zone Fighter. His weapons include the Proton Beam, Comet Kick, and Missile Night (rockets fired from missile launcher bracelets on the hero's wrists). Kei is endowed with a special sixth sense—that of keen perception and intuition. Her fighting disguise is Zone Angel. Akira is a bright and cheerful child who can also fight Gorga as Zone Jr.

The episodes which involve the three Toho titans are as follows:

EPISODE 4—"Invasion! The Attack of Gorga's Army Corps" (aired April 23, 1973)

A bright shooting star lands on Earth one evening. Early the next day, the Zone Family investigates the event, and they find Tatsuo, an old friend of Kei, whom claims to have been captured by Baron Gorga, from whom he has just escaped. All are suspicious of the story except Kei, but she is betrayed as Tatsuo turns out to be a Gorga agent. The alien summons the monster Wargilgar, and the agent transforms himself into the radiation monster Spiller. Zone Fighter is completely overwhelmed by the combined strength of these monsters, so Zone Angel and Zone Jr. send out an SOS to Earth's mightiest monster, the invincible Godzilla. The King of the Monsters engages the aliens with glorious results, Zone Fighter regains his strength, and together the two heroes rout their foes. So it is that a formidable new fighting team is born....

EPISODE 5—"The Arrival of King Ghidorah" (aired April 30, 1973)

EPISODE 6—"The Revenge of King Ghidorah" (aired May 7, 1973)

Baron Gorga reaches into outer space for his ultimate killer, the tricephal dragon which had ravaged many worlds....King Ghidorah. Seizing the opportunity to use Ghidorah as a special defense against Godzilla and the Zone Family, Baron Gorga incorporates Ghidorah's arch-enemy into his Dark Prism Operation which will rob the Earth of the sun and the vital energy it supplies. The space demon is sent to kill a scientist who has discovered a method to foil the Dark Prism Operation, but Zone Fighter intervenes. Zone Fighter faces the greatest challenge of his life, but Ghidorah's powers prove too great and the superhero is soundly defeated. After a difficult recovery, Zone Fighter meets King Ghidorah in outer space for a rematch. The showdown takes place on an asteroid where Ghidorah still proves an indestructible force. Combining his cleverness and the full extent of his super powers, Zone Fighter manages to topple the great beast and then blasts him with the full power of his super missiles. Defeated, the interstellar king is ordered to retreat, leaving Zone Fighter to celebrate a victory over the greatest menace to ever walk the Earth.

EPISODE 11—"In the Twinkling of an Eye—The Roar of Godzilla" (aired June 11, 1973)

Baron Gorga causes a famous race car driver to be killed, knowing that Hikaru will be selected as his replacement for the upcoming Grand Prix. Jealous for being passed over, one of Hikaru's colleagues cooperates with the aliens in a plan to kill Hikaru. The race car is booby-trapped and Hikaru is trapped inside the car as it is lowered into a metal crushing machine. Unable to transform into the giant superhero, Hikaru sends a call for help. Godzilla arrives just in time to smash the electrical wires that power the deadly machine. As Hikaru works himself free, Baron Gorga summons the space monster Gigan to battle Godzilla. The Earth monster easily defeats Gigan and leaves him for dead. But this is merely a deception, for as soon as Godzilla is out of sight, Gigan revives, ready to kill and destroy again. Zone Fighter takes the challenge and engages in a fierce battle in which he puts an end to the terrible invasion of the cyborg monster. Hikaru's friend pays for his betrayal with his life, may he rest in peace.

EPISODE 15—"Subversion! Godzilla, You Must Save Tokyo" (aired July 9, 1973)

Tokyo is plagued by a series of mysterious earthquakes which are the work of Zandolla, a mechanized drill-headed monster created by Baron Gorga. Akira is trapped in a huge crevasse by Zandolla, and both Zone Fighter and Zone Angel fly to the rescue in their spaceships. The monster resists their attacks, so Zone Fighter changes to giant size to rescue his brother. An underground battle ensues, with Zone Fighter steadily weakening without the sun's rays to charge his proton energy, the source of his power. Alerted by the ground quakes, Godzilla arrives. Having trapped Zone Fighter underground, Zandolla rises to meet Godzilla's challenge. But Godzilla finds tough opposition in Zandolla. During the fight, Godzilla smashes into the ground, causing a crack in the ground where Zone Fighter has been trapped. Zone Fighter escapes and gives his lizard friend a hand, and together they vanquish the robot....a great victory ending with a nice handshake between the Man of the Future and the Titan of the Past.

EPISODE 21—"Invincible! Godzilla Enraged" (aired August 20, 1973)

The war of the champions? Godzilla vs. Zone Fighter? The earth-shaking battle turns out to be a training session for both heroes. Meanwhile, deep in space the Gorga scientists return from an experiment where they have created Jellar, a gelatinous creature which can resist Zone Fighter's strongest weapon, the super proton beam. The capsule containing Jellar is sent to Earth but is intercepted by the Zone Family. However, the aliens capture Zone Jr. and offer to exchange the boy for the monster capsule. During the rescue, a battle breaks out, the capsule is accidentally dropped, and the sneaky beast is freed. Zone Fighter goes into battle, but he quickly realizes that the beast's resistance to

the proton beam may be his downfall. Always ready to save mankind from invaders, Godzilla is called from his cave to rescue his friend. Godzilla is more than a match for Jellar, but as he rips a limb from the creature, it explodes and takes the form of another monster, Kantam-Jellar, another more horrible (and more ridiculous) monster than the first. However, Zone Fighter quickly joins Godzilla in the fight and together they turn both Jellar brothers into molten jello.

EPISODE 25—"Crusoe! Zone and Godzilla vs. the Horrible Allies" (aired September 17, 1973)

Deciding that one monster is unable to defeat Zone Fighter, Baron Gargua launches a grand scale invasion by sending dozens of monsters to Earth at the same time. By chance, the Zone Family witnesses the delivery of one of the monster army to a secret base wherein the monsters are put into small capsules that are scattered about the city. The Zone Family manages to find the capsules before they can be activated, but on returning to the secret base, the Zone Family is greeted by the monsters Spidros and Calobug. Hikaru is trapped beneath a huge rock before he can transform to giant size. Alerted to the disturbance, Godzilla arrives in short order to stop the undesirable. But the two evil creatures are more than Godzilla can handle. Hikaru's friend Mina manages to free his so that he can transform into the giant hero. Together, Zone Fighter and Godzilla easily obliterate the two villainous creatures. This rousing defeat forebodes

seidon as possible. The peak of absurdity concerning Godzilla occurs when we are introduced to the "Zilla-Cave". Now we know where Godzilla hangs out until duty calls...a cavern in the side of a mountain where Godzilla sits around staring at nothing (unless it is equipped with lamps, tv, or something)...to emerge, the doors slide open to welcome our hero (all that is missing from the scene is the applause committee). Fortunately, they ended the series before introducing us to the Zilla-Mobile in which I can see Minya wearing a mask and shouting, "Holy danger! We're needed again in Tokyo city!"

Of the episodes mentioned above, the best are definitely "The Attack of Gargua's Army Corps" and "Godzilla Saves Tokyo". In the former, the story is conventional but satisfying. The first battle with Wargigar is excellent and offers the best of what the show could offer. "Godzilla Saves Tokyo" is merely Godzilla's best episode. Zandada provides the most exciting moments with Godzilla in the entire series, and there is such action.

"Hour of Godzilla" could have been good, as the trap set for Zone Fighter is interesting. But it all falls apart when Gigan appears. Godzilla's battle with Gigan is the worst fight ever put on film involving the King, far surpassing the atrocities in GODZILLA VS. MEGALON. "Godzilla Escaped" is almost as bad, providing nothing but laughs. Godzilla's final episode is very weak as the man in the suit puts on a terrible performance—Godzilla moves around as if he were drunk. The two monsters not only looked bad, but were not worth Godzilla's

GODZILLA MEETS ZONE FIGHTER



Left: Zone Fighter battles with King Ghidorah during the episode, "The Arrival of King Ghidorah". All of the Toho monsters used in the filming of Zone Fighter appeared were costumes left over from recent Godzilla films. The King Ghidorah costume from GODZILLA VS. GIGAN is seen here, looking much the worse for wear. Godzilla and Gigan costumes from GODZILLA VS. MEGALON were also used, each of which looked to be in very poor condition.

Right: Godzilla and Zone Fighter battle with Baron Gargua's champions, Spilar and Wargigar in "Invasion! The Attack of Gargua's Army Corps". One of the few publicity photos from the show, this photo shows monster designs which were fairly typical of the rest of the series, on a par with later Ultraman shows.



the end of Baron Gargua's plans to conquer our world.

Of the three Toho creations to appear in ZONE, THE METEOR MAN, King Ghidorah manages to come out the best. At least he is handled with a minimum of dignity, being treated as an overpowering ultimate villain. His defeat at the hands of Zone Fighter does not degrade his powers to the extent of unbelieveability. The episode with Ghidorah could have been the highlight of the series if the script did not rail for an any flying scenes which were accomplished using the terrible small model (used originally in GODZILLA VS. GIGAN) which has no mobility whatsoever.

On the other hand, Ghidorah's only friend and ally, the cyborg monster Gigan, is treated with an incredible lack of respect and general knowledge of what the beast is all about. Gigan does not use his laser beam or his bazooka, and worst of all the writers did not seem to be aware of his ability to fly...Gigan is lowered to Earth with parachutes!

Godzilla, still at the zenith of his superhero days, is presented just as poorly as he was in GODZILLA VS. MEGALON. The monster is played by a clown inside the suit who acted as if Godzilla was nothing more than a Japanese version of King Kong with reptile skin. The effects used to realize his fused atomic breath vary in texture—from a nice smoky spray coming from inside his mouth to a strange, fragmented ray that appears purple. The glowing of his film is done very cheaply and as

Interference. Frankly, the filmmakers would have mattered to use Godzilla for the last time in the finale episode of the series, helping Zone Fighter destroy Gargua in a good dramatic climax.

The Ghidorah episodes vary widely in the quality of scenes. Hand-to-hand combat scenes are nicely staged, especially the fight on the asteroid. The end to this battle given us the worst scene featuring visible wires (on King Ghidorah) that I have ever seen in my life.

The music is not very good, creating a circus-like atmosphere which detracts from the battles (reminiscent of GODZILLA VS. MEGALON). Also very annoying is the use of the theme song during the battles—it is played so loud that it muffles the sound effects of the battles.

Zone Fighter himself is played by a very agile actor that really dazzles the audience with some superb acrobatic fighting, easily surpassing all of the Ultraman actors except for Ultraman '80. Zone Fighter's most interesting power of attack is the super monster missiles which are created with simple but spectacular fireworks.

The villains are the weakest link of the series. The face design is as silly as can be, carved in solid plastic. Embellished with long, ridiculous antennae, their faces show no mobility or expression at all.

All in all, ZONE, THE METEOR MAN is a fun show for kids. It marked the first adventures of Godzilla on the small screen, and let's hope that it will also remain his last.



CAPSULE COMMENTARY



THE MAN WHO STOLE THE SUN

by
Ed Godziszewski

THE MAN WHO STOLE THE SUN is actually a lonely, distraught elementary school science teacher (played by Kenji Sawada) who buys/borrows/steals the necessary items that allow him to construct a homemade atomic bomb. Early in the film, the teacher becomes an unwilling hero when he and a hard-nosed police officer save the teacher's class from a madman terrorist who holds the class hostage in their school bus. Having built his bomb, the teacher is unsure of what to do with his creation. At first, he amuses himself by issuing frivolous demands on the government and antagonizing his former heroic partner who is assigned to head up the police investigation into the bomb threat. Inevitably, the teacher decides to ask for money in exchange for the bomb (even though he really has no desire for money), and he is nearly caught in a cleverly laid trap. Confused and dying from radiation poisoning which he has contracted, the teacher aimlessly walks the streets of Tokyo and detonates the bomb.

The first 90 minutes of THE MAN WHO STOLE THE SUN is finely crafted. Sawada plays his character with emphasis on his lonely, almost pathetic nature. Combined with a very somber tone, the character is a very sympathetic sort of anti-hero—one whose audience roots for while at the same time hoping his plan does not work out. Crisp editing makes the assembly of the bomb an engrossing scene. A clever contrast in moods is achieved as the teacher casually whistles the EIGHTY ATOM theme as he concentrates on purifying the bomb's deadly plutonium heart. Another fine scene involves the teacher's plan to demonstrate to the police that his nuclear threat is legitimate. Disguised as a pregnant woman, he sneaks through tight security in the Diet Building with the prototype bomb strapped to his stomach. Leaving the bomb in a stall in the women's washroom, he changes clothes and returns home to issue his first demand on the authorities. Uncertain as to what he should demand, he spontaneously decides to make a national TV network continue coverage of his favorite baseball game when normally the last inning is pre-empted by the news. Almost immediately, the TV station is flooded with thousands of calls from happy fans asking why at last did the network make this 'common sense' decision.

The police concoct a trap to catch the nuclear terrorist when the teacher agrees to exchange the bomb for money. There is a great deal of tension and excitement as the teacher narrowly escapes and the bomb is defused at the last moment.

Unfortunately, the climax of the film does not live up to expectations. Eventually, the teacher and police officer come face to face, and the officer begins to question the young man about his behavior—why did he build the bomb, what did he really want? At this point, the audience is dying to know these answers as well to gain some insight into this character. But this important payoff is never delivered—instead, there is a ridiculously staged struggle in which both men fall from the top of a 10-story building along with the bomb. Somehow, the teacher 'miraculously' survives the fall with the bomb intact, whereupon he walks away and detonates the bomb for a pointlessly nihilistic conclusion. This highly unsatisfactory climax to an otherwise good film makes one wonder if someone didn't steal the last few pages of the script instead of the sun.

MACROSS

by
Bill Gudmundson

When Tatsunoko Productions premiered MACROSS as an animated TV series in October 1982, it became a runaway success, captivating a large share of the science-fiction market that was in dire need of a new course after the overproliferation of giant robot cartoons that dominated the airwaves for the preceding five years. Not only did the series have an intelligent plot, the hardware designs for this new generation of mechanical devices spawned countless imitations from competing TV series (HOSPEADA) and the toy industry (TRANSFORMERS). With the series' tremendous success as an impetus, MACROSS was adapted as a movie in 1984, in the tradition of predecessors like YAMATO and GALAXY EXPRESS.

Like most film versions of Japanese anime TV series, MACROSS differs much from the original series. Many subplot elements are altered, but the main theme of the story remains more or less the same.

The Macross City/Space Fortress is engaged in combat with the alien Zentrady forces in the vicinity of Saturn. In the midst of the conflict, young Valkyrie pilot Hikaru Ichijo becomes separated from his flight and is locked up in a forgotten chamber of the gigantic Macross with the beautiful singer Lynn Minmay. When he is finally rescued, he finds himself at the apex of a love triangle that includes himself, Minmay, and Nina Hymene, the chief officer on the ship's bridge. On a larger scale (in more ways than one), the Zentrady, whose members average more than 40 feet in height, in addition to battling the Earth people, wage a literal battle of the sexes. The battle has gone on for as long as to make the Zentrady two sexual races. All hope is not lost, for the reconciliation of all three races could hinge on the performance of one little love song.

MACROSS is foremost a visual film, certainly one of the best in its category. Whereas the television series was reasonably well done with an outstanding animation sequence now and then, MACROSS—THE MOVIE exists as a single, complete piece of stunning animation. This is especially evident in the battle scenes which are quite possibly the most exciting and expertly conceived sequences in any animation production. Character detail and design is excellent, and close attention to detail throughout the film creates an illusion of life often not found in live-action productions. All this is topped off by what could be considered the 'ultimate' rock video—an all-out final battle, with vocal accompaniment by Lynn Minmay.

MACROSS—THE MOVIE opened in Japan in August 1984, released in Dolby Stereo. Running time: 117 minutes.



NAUSICÄÄ

by
Mark Rainey

SECRET OF THE TELEGIAN

by
Mike Paul

In a far distant time, the Earth recovers from a global ecological upheaval. The surface teems with mutated plant and animal life, the population spread across the planet in small, marginally habitable pockets amidst the worldwide atmospheric poisoning. The Valley of the Wind is one such pocket, home of Nausicaä, princess of the valley where one clan of villagers make their meager dwelling. In the surroundings of the arid environment, the villagers contend with life complicated by dangerous creatures and threatened by a kingdom of militaristic warriors who prey on the villagers in their massive airships.

In ages past, the Earth was overrun by a race of gigantic mutants who herded and exploited a species of intelligent insects called 'On'. The On are huge creatures that still roam the planet, feared by many because of their unpredictable nature. Nausicaä, however, possesses certain telepathic powers and can communicate with the insects. For her, the On hold no fear. The raiding warriors discover a larva of one of the ancient mutant giants and by artificially breeding it, they plan to destroy the On and conquer Earth, leaving all peaceful villages at their mercy. As a Warrior of the Wind, Nausicaä must defend her people and restore peace to the ravaged planet.

NAUSICÄÄ is a fantasy that is mystical in nature, the plot emphasizing the ancient prophecy that tells of the rise of the common people under the leadership of a great Warrior of the Wind. A colorful tapestry in the Hall of the Wind, Nausicaä's home, depicts the legendary warrior as a great man with a falcon upon his shoulder, stating that when the wind stops in the Valley of the Wind, a great change will affect the world. In the end it is Nausicaä who fulfills the prophecy, a young girl bearing only a small squirrel-like animal on her shoulder.

The setting of the film is composed of pastel-colored organic backgrounds that lend an alien atmosphere to the wasted environment. Skillful animation with sharp attention to detail, yet drawn in simplistic style, adds special character to NAUSICÄÄ that is dreamlike in nature, heightened by a slow, lyrical pace. A melodic score utilizing a full symphonic orchestra is augmented by electronic effects and synthesized background music, providing a beautiful aural setting to highlight the visuals.

Character designs for NAUSICÄÄ are by the creators of the LUPIN III series, and characters in NAUSICÄÄ do greatly resemble their progenitors. Nausicaä herself is the spitting image of Clarice from CAGLIOSTRO CASTLE. Sanbo, one of the evil chieftains, very closely resembles Count Cagliostro in design and temperament. Unfortunately NAUSICÄÄ lacks the facsimile of LUPIN's Ed that to provide levity in the feature. Typical of many Japanese features, animated or otherwise, there are long passages in the film with little or no dialogue, leaving the actions of the characters and the descriptive settings to explain the course of the plot. The Japanese dubbing comes across quite well, with just enough over-emphasis on vocals to heighten drama in tense scenes of character interaction, such as where Nausicaä confronts her father's murderers when the raiders first strike her village. Through brief flashback sequences we get to see a few moments of Nausicaä's childhood which provide some enlightenment on how she came to be sympathetic to the On. Overall, NAUSICÄÄ is successful in attempting to portray characters that have depth and are interesting, rather than relying on non-stop action to advance the plot.

All in all, NAUSICÄÄ is a very different type of production than most of the recent high-tech animation, but the tone and style are uniquely Japanese and far superior to American efforts like THE BLACK CAULDRON which was so highly touted previous to its release. NAUSICÄÄ shows no compromise in its integrity and exhibits what the Japanese would call 'vector'—its producers knew what direction they wanted the film to take and held to their ideals, something THE BLACK CAULDRON and most other American animation products fail to show.

A mysterious murder takes place in the horror cave of an amusement park—retired Army Sergeant Sukimoto has been killed with a bayonet, the only clues being a military ID tag and a strand of strange electrical wire. Later that day, three men who served together in WWII gather at the Daibon Cabaret, each having just received an ID tag. A tape recording is delivered to them which explains Sukimoto's murder and threatens death to the others. The voice on the tape identifies itself as that of Lance Corporal Sudo whom all believed killed at the end of the war. Seemingly out of nowhere, the figure of Sudo appears, glowing with a weird electrical distortion. He kills one of the men and escapes, apparently vanishing into this air.

The surviving men seek out police protection and explain why Sudo wishes to kill them. At the war's end, a small band of soldiers was assigned to transfer the research of electrical scientist Dr. Niki to Tokyo. One of the crates fell, breaking open to reveal gold bars. Sudo and Dr. Niki were incensed that these men would try to steal this gold which rightly belonged to the people of Japan. The would-be thieves stabbed Sudo with a bayonet and shot both Sudo and Dr. Niki. Left for dead, the two men were buried by an avalanche caused by the killers. To their astonishment, both Sudo and Dr. Niki have survived!

Dr. Niki has developed a matter teleportation device which, unknown to him, Sudo has been using to carry out his murders of revenge. Sudo commits his third murder by cleverly tricking the police and then escaping in a teleportation chamber hidden inside an empty box car. Eventually the authorities track down Dr. Niki and inform him of the bayonet murders being committed by Sudo. When he confronts Sudo with this information, Sudo strangles the scientist and then transports himself to the island of Murasaki where the last of his victims is hiding. Meanwhile, Dr. Niki destroys the receiving chamber of the teleporter with his last breath. Sudo extracts his last measure of revenge with his final murder and then flees as the police arrive on the scene. Reaching the teleporter, Sudo steps inside and activates the unit, defiantly laughing at his pursuers. But without a receiving chamber, Sudo meets a grisly death as his body slowly disintegrates.

Though an avid Toho monster enthusiast, I found this 1963 feature film directed by Jun Fukuda to be an enjoyable change of pace. Basically a murder mystery, the film contains enough suspense to maintain viewer interest and attention throughout. Shinichi Sekizawa's script is well conceived and its references to national loyalty, though not necessary for the film to work, lend a believable element to the plot. The special effects used for the teleportation device and to depict the distortion of the telegian's body were quite fascinating and realistic, elevating the film a notch above the run-of-the-mill murder mystery. S. Ikuno's music was adequate, adding a proper amount of suspense when needed. THE SECRET OF THE TELEGIAN, only released in black and white to television in this country, is rarely seen today.



AKIRA IFUKUBE (Cont.)

speaks of high tragedy, its treatment markedly similar to music found in the MAJIN films by Daiel.

KING 204-7169-70

SYMPHONIC FANTASIA 1,2,3 (1983)

The three parts of the SYMPHONIC FANTASIA form a series of suites composed of themes written for the Toho science fiction films. Suite 1 begins with GODZILLA'S THEME as orchestrated in MISHIMA TAI GOJIRA; from there it lapses into the title theme from the original GODZILLA, the native chant from KING KONG VS. GODZILLA, and BARAGON'S THEME from FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD. The suite finishes with the BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE march which metamorphoses into the quick-paced march from DESTROY ALL MONSTERS.

Suite 2 runs through themes from GHIDRAH, KING KONG VS. GODZILLA, GODZILLA VS. THE THING, VARAN, KING KONG ESCAPES, and finally winds up with the BATTLE MARCH from WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS.

Suite 3 opens with a blast from DESTROY ALL MONSTERS and proceeds through several themes from KING KONG ESCAPES (naming element X, and the love theme), A brief motif from ATARON sets up OPERATION KING KONG from KING KONG VS. GODZILLA, and the giant octopus music from the same film. The ATARON march triumphantly resurfaces and leads into the spectacular battle theme from THE MYSTERIANS - a tumultuous finale for the entire set of suites.

RONDO IN BURLESQUE (1972)

Heavy Japanese drums pound out the rhythm in this piece; a combination of themes originally written for GODZILLA, BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE, and LITTLE PRINCE AND THE EIGHT-HEADED DRAGON. While the tone is still military, there is almost a dirge-like quality to the piece, owing largely to the constant pounding of the drums.

POSTICE 5030

SINFONIA TAPKAARA (1979)

This work appears on King 284-7190 which has already been covered.

CONCERTO No. 2 for VIOLIN and ORCHESTRA (1976)

Takeshi Kobayashi takes on the all-important role of solo violinist for this recent work. A more matured Ifukube is evident here; his violin takes on a form more akin to repressed anger rather than to outright hatred. Of course, Ifukube cannot resist taking his compositions into realms of symphonic glory, and from time to time, Kobayashi's violin is joined by a full orchestra, pushing up to brief heights, falling back, and finally building to the inevitable Ifukube climax.

POSTICE 5031

LAUDA CONCERTATA PER ORCHESTRA E MARIMBA (1979)

A somber opening is the prelude for the entrance of the marimba - a xylophone-like instrument. What follows is almost a conflict between orchestra and marimba -- the orchestra takes on a more heavy tone, the marimba goes into flights of insanity. Finally, both link up in a crazed finale that Keko Abe, the marimba soloist, must have had nightmares over, as both orchestra and marimba compete to see who can play faster.

JAPANESE WHATSODY (1936)

The first movement, "Nocturne," opens with violins creating a very oriental-flavored melody. The addition of various Japanese instruments adds to this feel. The second movement, "Fete," introduces one of Ifukube's fast themes, later to become very prevalent in his works. As with many of his other pieces, the fast theme recedes and builds up again, finally forming the all-powerful finale. Although written very early in his career, this piece retains much of the raw intensity and bluntness that characterizes much of his work.

In the unfortunately all-too-long hiatus since the publication of JAPANESE GIANTS #4, the face of audio-visual entertainment has undergone a radical facelift, due largely to the availability of home video and cable television -- a fact that precipitates a certain amount of alteration in the contents of these pages. The filmbook format that has been a long-familiar tenant of fanzines was once one of the only practical means of presenting a specialized type of film to the public, as broadcasts on local television were few and far between. Now, there are a number of Japanese titles available commercially in this country, and individuals with a modicum of connections can procure the original Japanese versions -- a feat that was not so long ago a dream in which few could indulge. So, you may find that with this publication, more emphasis is placed on the production aspect of the Japanese fantasy/sci-fi genre than ever before. In this way, JAPANESE GIANTS can hopefully continue to convey information that would otherwise be passed over by the bulk of film-oriented fanzines. We feel this is especially important now that First Showmaker's JAPANESE FANTASY FILM JOURNAL has been indefinitely terminated.

The predominance of animation in the Japanese cinema has generated a cultural phenomenon that is far-reaching indeed; the local bowls at you every time you enter a department store, comic shop, or toy store. Groups like the Cartoon/Fantasy Organization have over a short period of years recruited large numbers of fans worldwide and successfully campaigned to expose the excellence of Japanese animation to followers of fantasy and sci-fi everywhere. With the resurgence of quality live-action filmmaking such as GOJIRA 1985, this past year has seen the best of both worlds, proving that creative excellence within this specialized field of Japanese cinema has not gone the ways of the wind. For a country that is reputed to stifle creativity in its youth, concentrating instead on the development of technological expertise, there is no shortage of inventive sophistication in the artistry currently emerging from the Japanese film studio.

So in the tradition we have endeavored to follow since JAPANESE GIANTS was born in 1974, we present to you what we hope will be justice to the films we have showcased. To all of you who have waited impatiently for this issue's release, we humbly ask your forgiveness, and rest assured that our efforts will not diminish so long as there are those of you who share the regard that we as the staff of JG hold for our favorite media.

Mark Rainey



*The Japanese
Fantasy Film Journal*
NUMBER FIFTEEN

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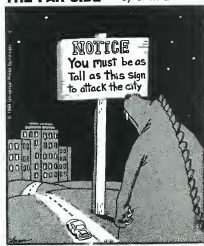
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NICK ADAMS
INTERGALACTIC TOUGH GUY CAN'T KEEP A JOB.

By **KYLE SMITH**

ALTHOUGH IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE NICK ADAMS BEING THE ONLY GUY IN THE WORLD WHO CAN KEEP A JOB, UNDER THE ASSUMED NAME OF ROBERT DUBOIS, OUTRAGED CITIZENS APPLIED ON CIRCUIT TRIPS, PICKING HE HAD THE RIGHT GUY.



DISASTER WAS INEVITABLE. AFTER AN UNDISTINGUISHED STUNT AS A "ROCKET MAN," NICK WAS PROMOTED TO AMBASSADOR, AND AT THE FIRST ECLIPSE OF THE MOON...



THE PRESIDENT MOMENT...

MR. AMBASSADOR GLENN, MAY I PRESENT MY SISTER FROM KILAK. HER WORLD ONLY RECENTLY REGAINED A LIFE-SUSTAINING THERMOSTAT OF 300°F.



HEH! Y'SHOULDA LEFT Y'SISTAM PACKED IN LEE!



NICE GOING, GLENN! AND THANKS! I SAID I'D FOLLOW YOU TO HELL AND BACK!



GODZILLA VERSUS A BIG DOG
This long-awaited 16th Godzilla feature was five years in the making and it seems overdue. To return a nice puppy grows in the course of a year into a full-on G-dog. The big dog runs attack in the suburbs of Tokyo, chomping dais and digging up weeds. "Only Godzilla can save us now," declares the general. Luckily, some teenagers pickoning on Monster Island were Godzilla with their loud music. But the Godzilla that awakens is no longer the original actor, with Akira Matsuda, who at 56 has hung up his scales. The G-dog is now portrayed by Roger Moore, hereafter famous only as Sean Connery's replacement. The role is well a something of a deception as Moore monster incarnates the big dog with his lanky build 22 minutes into the picture. The remainder of the film is a showcase for a rather wooden performance by Moore, as he lachrymatically stomps on model tanks and delivers hymenaeal to apartment buildings. Moore's glib tag lines, such as "I've been nine years old as he devours a Japanese jet, and out of place in the role. The film is the real disaster here, it can't beat only of the usual low special effects and supporting cast. (D)

Godzilla and a Big Dog star as Godzilla and a Big Dog in Godzilla Versus a Big Dog



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On surface: 30 knots (55 mph)
Between the earth and 20 kilometers (12 miles)
powered by a wind-up coil.
On surface: 300 horsepower (220 kW) powered
by nuclear propulsion.

DIRECTED BY
INOSHIRO HONDA
SPECIAL EFFECTS BY
EIJI TSUBURAYA



Toho Company, Ltd.

14-1, Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

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